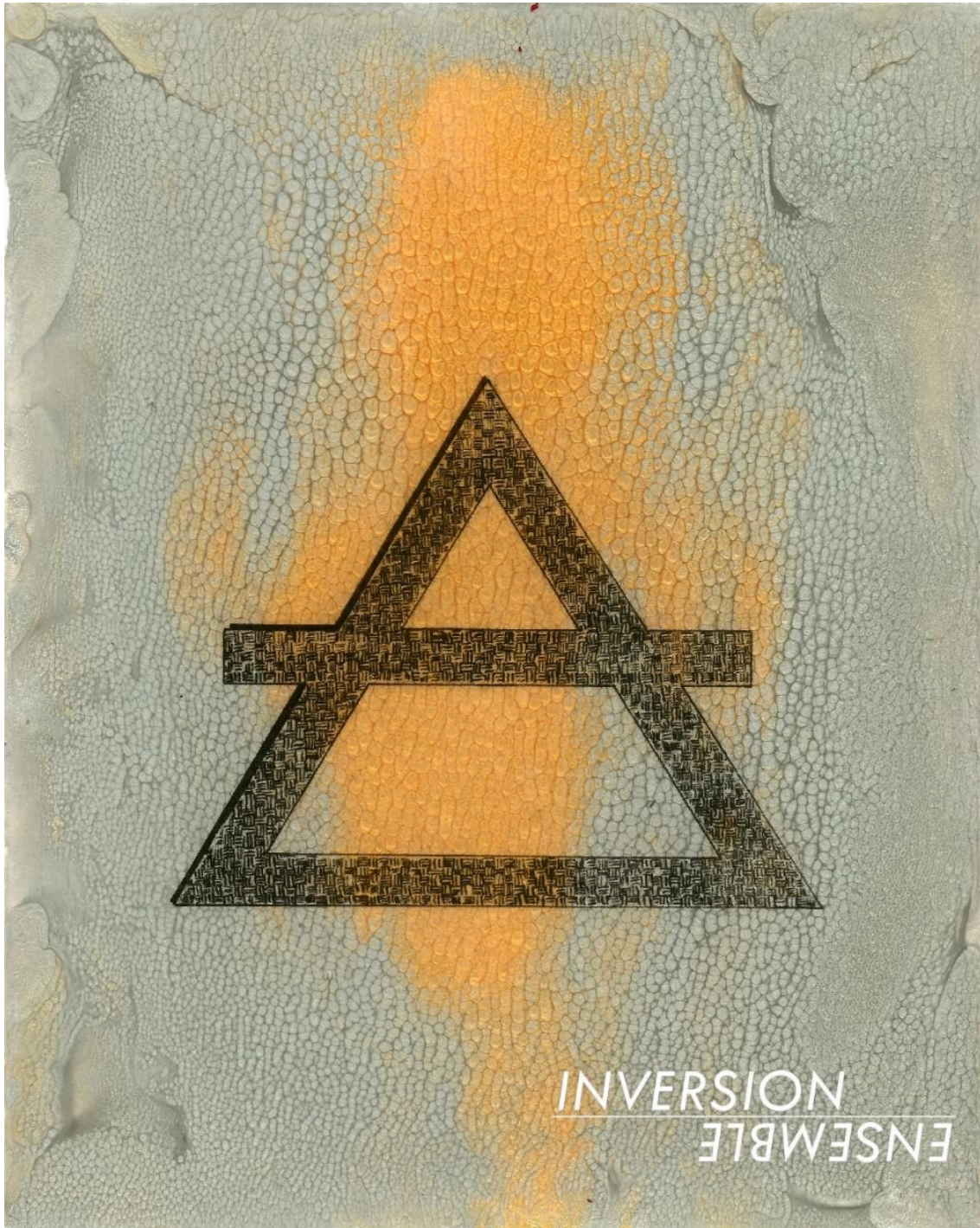


# Aether: Air

inspiration/wind



Saturday,  
28th

29th

Estrella,  
Georgetown,  
Presbyterian

September  
@ 7pm  
Sunday,  
September  
@ 3pm  
Weslyean at

Tx Redeemer  
Church

INVERSION  
ENSEMBLE



## *Note from the Artistic Director*



Welcome to “Aether:Air”, the second concert of our season celebrating the ancient alchemical elements. With “Air”, we’ll be exploring the literal air/wind, along with the themes it represents: inspiration, the human soul, and our relationship to the heavens. This repertoire will take you to places equally beautiful and unexpected. I’m pleased and honored to once again share the podium for this project with returning guest conductor Dr. Joshua Chai. Enjoy the experience. As always, thank you for supporting the creation and performance of new choral music.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trevor F. Shaw'.

Trevor F. Shaw  
Artistic Director  
Inversion Ensemble

### *Joshua Chai, Guest Conductor*

Joshua Chai is the Director of Choral Activities, the chair of the Music program, an Assistant Professor of Music, and the University Cantor Concordia University Texas, where he conducts the University Choir and teaches courses in music theory, music technology, music history, conducting, and corporate worship. Joshua holds a DMA from the University of Kentucky, a MM from California State University - Long Beach, and an undergraduate degree in Music and Mathematics from St. Olaf College. He has directed choirs from collegiate chamber choirs to professional children’s choirs, men’s and women’s choirs, and instrumental groups ranging from jazz to wind ensembles. The choirs at Concordia present concerts each year ranging from small, intimate informal gatherings combining choral, solo, and a wide range of musical styles to major masterwork concerts with choir and orchestra. Recent masterwork projects have included Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (2016), J.S. Bach's *Mass in B Minor* (2017), Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Dona nobis pacem* (2018), Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* (2018) and the Brahms *Ein deutsches Requiem* (2019). A freelance tenor, organist, collaborative pianist, and composer, Joshua maintains an active and diverse musical schedule. As a pianist, he regularly serves as an accompanist for regional, state, and national honor choirs; as a composer, his compositions have been sung and played in universities, churches, and schools around the country.



at

### *Christopher Fludd, Winner 2nd Annual Emerging Composer Contest*



Christopher Fludd is a gifted musician from Long Island, New York currently in his senior year at Westminster Choir College, studying Music Education and Theory/Composition. With a voice and composition primary, Chris studies with Composer Joel Phillips, Mezzo-Soprano Theodora Hanslowe, and Baritone Elem Eley. He also coaches with accompanist Julia Hannah and Seth Trumbore. At Westminster, Chris sings in three-leading ensembles; Westminster Symphonic Choir, Westminster Jubilee Singers, and Westminster Choir. These ensembles have provided many exciting opportunities including touring with the Westminster Choir around the country along with a tour to Beijing, China. Last Summer, Chris made his debut performance at the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina - singing the role of Paolino in Domenic Cimarosa's *Il Matrimonio Segreto*. Chris continues to inspire others with incredible musicianship and passion for the arts. His piece entitled “Watercolors” features text by a recent graduate of Westminster Choir College - Jade Tiara Blocker. Chris would like to thank Jade for her incredible writing featured - not only in this piece but in other pieces that he has written.



## **Inversion Ensemble**

### ***Aether: Air inspiration/wind***

September 28 & 29, 2019

Trevor F. Shaw, Artistic Director / Dr. Joshua Chai, Guest Conductor

\*indicates World Première Performance

#### **A Clear Midnight**

Trevor Shaw

Text: Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

THIS is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,  
Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done,  
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes  
thou lovest best,  
Night, sleep, death and the stars.

Walt Whitman's poem from "Leaves of Grass" is ostensibly an epitaph. There's no denying death as one of its prominent themes. However, there's so much more barely beneath the surface of the text. In this choral setting of "A Clear Midnight", I sought to sonically capture the human spirit breaking free from all that binds it - sorrow, societal convention, oppression, elitism, etc. To me, what has always been the beauty of Whitman's body of work is the brilliant mastery of language delivered in a form which can be comprehended by all who read or hear it. This piece is harmonically thick, and was my first composition to end on my "signature" sharp-eleven chord. I felt that this description of death required a brightness and insistent optimism that a standard triad couldn't deliver.

#### **This Sky**

Carlos Cordero

Text: Hafiz (1315-1390), translated by Daniel Ladinsky

This sky where we live  
is no place to lose your wings.  
So love, love, love.

This Sky is a short, high-spirited piece. I like to think that we are angels that came to earth to spread love and tell people to stop worrying and start enjoying more. This could be the piece you sing to someone who you feel needs to know how incredible and special they are, or maybe even to yourself, or your past self. It is my hope that the celebration, acceptance of oneself and willingness to share with others in this short piece will give the audience joy, and make them smile.

Since moving to Houston, many people have helped me and showed me my own value. I wrote and dedicate this piece to Dr. Betsy Cook Weber, and my beloved Concert Chorale. The opportunity to have a world premiere by such an incredible choir at the 28th Béla Bartók International Choral Competition was an honor.

**Reading: *The Wind Shifts* by Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)**



## The Wind, One Brilliant Day

Isaac Lovdahl

Text: Antonio Machado (1875-1939)

The wind, one brilliant day, called  
to my soul with an odor of jasmine.

'In return for the odor of my jasmine,  
I'd like all the odor of your roses.'

'I have no roses; all the flowers  
in my garden are dead.'

'Well then, I'll take the withered petals  
and the yellow leaves and the waters of the fountain.'

the wind left. And I wept. And I said to myself:  
'What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?'

"The Wind, One Brilliant Day" is set to Robert Bly's English translation of Spanish poet Antonio Machado's beautiful poem of the same name. At face value, the message of this piece could certainly be about planetary stewardship--something we need to be increasingly aware of in today's world. However, Machado had intended for the 'garden' in this poem to be an allegory of the human soul/spirit. "What have you done with the garden that was entrusted to you?" Machado hopes for us all to check the state of our own garden every day, and to tend to it as needed to make sure it is healthy and flourishing. What does your garden look like today?

## Wren\*

Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

Text: Robert MacFarlane (b. 1976)

When wren whirrs from stone to furze the world around her slows, for wren is quick, so quick she blurs  
the air through which she flows, yes—

Rapid wren is needle, rapid wren is pin—and wren's song is sharp-song, briar-song, thorn-song, and  
wren's flight is dart-flight, flick-flight, light-flight, yes—

Each wren etches, stitches, switches, glitches, yes—

Now you think you see wren, now you know you don't.

Commissioned by Inversion Ensemble, *Wren* (2019) by Adrienne Inglis sets Robert Macfarlane's acrostic poem of the same name for mixed chorus and flute. With quick harmonic changes, syncopations, and melodic gestures, the composition captures a sense of the charming poem as well as the actual Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) found year round throughout the United Kingdom. Macfarlane's poem *Wren* comes from his 2017 illustrated poetry book, *The Lost Words*, which conjures pictures of wild things and untamed spaces that get shortchanged in modern urban life.





## I Know You

Jeffrey Derus

Text: Carl Sandburg (1878-1969)

I HAVE lived in many half-worlds myself ... and so I know you.

I leaned at a deck rail watching a monotonous sea, the same circling birds and the same plunge of furrows carved by the plowing keel.

I leaned so ... and you fluttered struggling between two waves in the air now ... and then under the water and out again ... a fish ... a bird ... a fin thing ... a wing thing.

Child of water, child of air, fin thing and wing thing ... I have lived in many half worlds myself ... and so I know you.

In short, the piece is about being stuck between two worlds, two parts of who we are. One being the opposite of the other, and when you are in one world a different struggle is presented to you. Each having their own challenges, you must choose to fight and travel between both or let one over take you. The flying fish has this dilemma every moment of its life between the water of the sea and the air of the sky. We as humans can relate at times to that struggle.

**- Winner: 2nd Annual Emerging Composer Contest -**

## Watercolors

Christopher Fludd

- I. Dawn
- II. Sunset

Text: Jade Blocker

### **I. Dawn**

Still and unwavering  
Through the depths and surface alike  
I see my world clear and bright  
As my sun begins to rise

### **II. Sunset**

As I let go of the day I knew  
And welcome the eventide  
I know this night won't last forever  
And soon you will rise

“Watercolors” stems from my senior composition project. This project entitled “A Child’s Gift” reflects my life and all the wonderful blessings that have come my way. Being able to grow in patience is a true gift and I’ve compared that gift to my favorite element of life - water. This piece is separated into three different movements/colors.

“**I. Dawn**” gives the imagery of the still and unwavering water. It is calm, surrounded by the blue sky. It’s the moment right before the sun begins to rise and you will hear the theme return towards the end with reassurance and passion as we move to our next image.

“II. Sunset” reflects the beautiful colors provided by the sun. This movement shifts the focus of harmony - granting lush and colorful moments. Towards the end of this movement, we look forward to the moon rising and setting another image of pure black and the wonderful reflection of the stars.

## **u n u n d e r s t a n d i n g\***

Bethany Younge

Text: Bethany Younge

a private language  
carried about us, them  
ununderstanding

Language is often used as a tool by composers to provide greater clarity regarding meaning. In the case of Ununderstanding, that which is language and that which is music remain inextricably abstruse. The text may at times offer glimpses of recognizable phonemes, perhaps even words, but ultimately revels in its de-memorization of language and disintegration of meaning. What can we remember as listeners, as ancient humans when we take a primal approach to sound and attempt to undo all we've "learned?" Can we really un-understand?

## **A Cloud**

Alsu Nigmatullina

Text: Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

A Cloud withdrew from the Sky  
Superior Glory be  
But that Cloud and its Auxiliaries  
Are forever lost to me

Had I but further scanned  
Had I secured the Glow  
In an Hermetic Memory  
It had availed me now.

Never to pass the Angel  
With a glance and a Bow  
Till I am firm in Heaven  
Is my intention now.

Sometimes, after a hard day, peering into the plains, feeling the wind on my skin, I see clouds in the sky and admire their movement. At this moment, I begin to feel a touch of eternity and wonder: “What lies ahead for us?” I tried to convey this whole spectrum of emotions - from doubt to confidence - through the sensual poetry of Emily Dickinson in my new composition “A Cloud” for mixed choir.

**Reading: *The Flight* by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)**

## **Sunset Mass**

Ola Gjeilo

I. The Spheres (Kyrie)

Text: Traditional

*Kyrie eléison* (Κύριε, ἐλέησον)

Lord, have mercy

*Christe eléison* (Χριστέ, ἐλέησον)

Christ, have mercy

Traveling from beginning to end aurally through Ola Gjeilo's *Sunrise*, one could experience the full metaphorical journey from the starry Heaven to Earth, from undifferentiated darkness to solid, warm life, evolving spiritually as a human. Gjeilo doesn't believe in the value of suffering in itself, without redemption or a deeper compassion that transcends the suffering. But Gjeilo's Mass certainly creates a beautiful journey that from beginning to end suggests sadness, pain, chaos, drama and conflict. The essence of the Mass includes not only the dark parts of the human psyche, but also the entire spectrum of human emotion. Gjeilo firmly believes his *Sunrise* mass is a journey in which, "The self, having experienced each movement in the work, now has the perspective and understanding to peacefully contain everything it has gone through."

## **The Last Transmissions of Amelia Earhart\***

Robbie LaBanca

Text: Amelia Earhart (1897-1937?) and Various Confirmed and Unconfirmed Sources

*Merciless life*

*Laughs in the burning sun*

*And only death*

*Slow-circling down*

*Shadows with buzzard wings*

*The arid flesh*

*Burned before the passion pangs of love.*

*Can you read me? This is Amelia Earhart*

*Please come in*

*My navigator is badly hurt and must have help*

*can't hold on much longer*

*We have taken in water*

*We are in need of medical care*

*Plane down....an uncharted island, small uninhabited*

*seriously injured*

*down in ocean*

*on or near little island at a point near*

*our plane about out of gas*

*Water all around*

*Very dark*

*We must be on you but cannot see you*

*Gas is running low*

*been unable to reach you by radio ... we are flying at 1,000 feet.*

*We are on the line 157 337*

*We repeat this message on 6210 kilocycles*

There is much mystery and intrigue surrounding the disappearance of Amelia Earhart that occurred during her attempt to circumnavigate the globe in 1937. What I feel is often lost in the morass of legends and conspiracy theories is that Amelia Earhart was a human being with a complex and beautiful life that was suddenly erased when she became a missing person. Written for Inversion Ensemble's 2019 concert *Aether: Air, The Last Transmissions of Amelia Earhart* combines the text both confirmed and anecdotal transmissions shortly after her disappearance near Howland Island in the Pacific along with lines of poetry written by Earhart herself. Earhart submitted many poems to literary magazines under assumed names and this text

seemed fitting for the context of this piece as it speaks to “merciless life” and how fleeting both love and existence can be when it is “burned in the passion paws of life”. This piece is what is referred to as a “graphic score” combining both written notation as well as shapes, lines and even photos that have been arranged on the pages of the score. While some directions are provided, much of the score is left up to interpretation of the director and performers. This piece is intended to create a sense of disorientation, confusion and isolation. You will hear lines both sung and spoken, vocal sound effects and extended techniques such as ingressive singing (sung by inhaling over the vocal folds), overtone singing and more. May the spirit of exploration and boldness of Amelia Earhart live on through this piece alongside her humanity and whimsical personality.

## **“Fly to Paradise” from *Paradise Lost***

Eric Whitacre

Text: David Norona & Eric Whitacre

And all she ever thinks about  
Is being any other place than this,  
'Cause she remembers having wings  
But she's forgotten what it's like to feel a paradise of bliss.  
And all I want to do is fly,  
Just fly,  
And all I want to do is fly,  
Just fly...  
To paradise!  
And all she ever thinks about  
Is memories of soaring through the sky,  
'Cause she remembers having wings  
But she's forgotten what it feels like to fly.  
And all I want to do is fly,  
Just fly,  
And all I want to do is fly,  
Just fly...  
To paradise!

*Paradise Lost*, a work of music theater with book by Edward Esch, music by Eric Whitacre, and lyrics by director David Norona and Whitacre. The story follows the last remaining tribe of angels, marooned in a post-apocalyptic Paradise as children and now grown into young adulthood. Within their fortress they have created a militant, martial society, always training for the next attack, always afraid. One angel, Exstasis, remains untouched by the brutal world in which she lives and dreams only of flying.

The show, heavily inspired by and infused with the style of Japanese anime and manga, is a powerful and visceral hybrid of musical theater, opera, electronica, film score and Asian drumming. A sold-out 6 week run in Los Angeles (summer 2007) was followed by a sold-out concert performance at Carnegie Hall (June, 2010).

# INVERSION ENSEMBLE

Trevor Shaw, Artistic Director ✦  
Robbie LaBanca, Managing Director ✦  
Joshua Chai, Guest Conductor ✦

Austin Haller, Pianist                      Cathie Parsley, Rehearsal Pianist  
Adrienne Inglis, Flute

Adrienne Inglis ✦	Gary W. Pyle
Adrienne Pedrotti Bingamon	Jennifer Inglis Hudson
Albert Garcia	Jennifer Whitwell
Alissa Floyd	Jenny Houghton
Allyssa Kemp	John Proft
Angela Irving	Lena Gwendolyn Hill
Artha Weaver	Marjorie Halloran ✦
Brad Fanta	Mark Tomasino
Brian Minnick	Mary Elizabeth Ashton
Carol Brown	Patricia Combs
Chris Tuggey	Phillip Michael Bernard ✦
Christopher Auchter	Rebecca Stidolph
Cina Crisara	Sam Wise
Doug Rensi	Stephanie K. Andrews ✦
Dylan Graves	Wravan Godsoe
Garrett Gerard	

✦ Ensemble Composer

## Who is Inversion Ensemble?

Austin's Inversion Ensemble is a choral collective made up of composers and singers formed to give voice to innovative choral works and to encourage the creation of new music, especially in the Austin area. A great deal of our repertoire is written especially for Inversion Ensemble by composers who sing within the ranks of the ensemble.

While many members of Inversion Ensemble perform, conduct, compose, study, and teach music full-time, the group also includes non-professional participants who are equally passionate about choral music and ensuring it thrives as a modern art form.

# Friends of Inversion Ensemble

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who contributes to the existence of Inversion Ensemble. We are completely funded by your generous support. Donations made to our organization through our fiscal sponsor, Fractured Atlas, are tax-deductible and ensure we can do things like print programs, hire accompanists, secure performance venues, and so much more. Visit [www.inversionensemble.com](http://www.inversionensemble.com) to make a donation.

## Singer's Circle \$100-250

Katie Adams	Kristina Liston
Elizabeth Armstrong	Meri Liston
Steven Brennfleck	Hilary Marchbanks
Joshua Chai	Nancy McBride
Kathleen Chai	Rebecca Mercado
Cina Crisara	Laura Moore
Gregory Eaton	Adrienne Pedrotti Bingamon
Eva Hawker	Sherrille Reed
Mollie Hejl	Mary Simon
VR Hoisington	Diane Skeel
Benjamin Hummel	Peggy Themar
Shawn Harrison	Martin Torres
Adrienne Inglis	Neva Williams
Thomas Kolenda	Barry Williamson

## Composer's Circle \$250-1000

Lissa Anderson	Joanna Fried
Angela Blackmon	Alexander Johnson
Claire Breihan	Craig Hella Johnson
Carol Brown	Bill & Lou Ann Lasher
Melissa Call	Cathie Parsley
Garrett Cordes	O.R. Schmidt
Christine Duval	Rebekah Trevelise
Mary Lou Dye	Kimberly Vitray
Susan Flowers	Debra Watkins
Trevor F. Shaw	

## Conductor's Circle \$1000-2500

Anonymous	Bill & Sandy Fivecoat
Don Anderson	Lena Hill
Lynne Dobson	Dana Houghton

## Inversion Circle \$2500+

Apple, Inc.

Steven Moore

Jennifer Inglis Hudson

With your support, Inversion Ensemble has grown at a truly staggering rate having completed 10 individual projects, premiering over 60 new works by living composers, attracted the attention of our colleagues in the classical music community through recognition by both the Austin Chronicle, naming our *I, Too, Sing America* concert one of the best classical music performances of 2018 and The Austin Critics Table Awards that recognized our organization with four individual nominations including Best Performance of 2018 - all since forming in 2017!

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