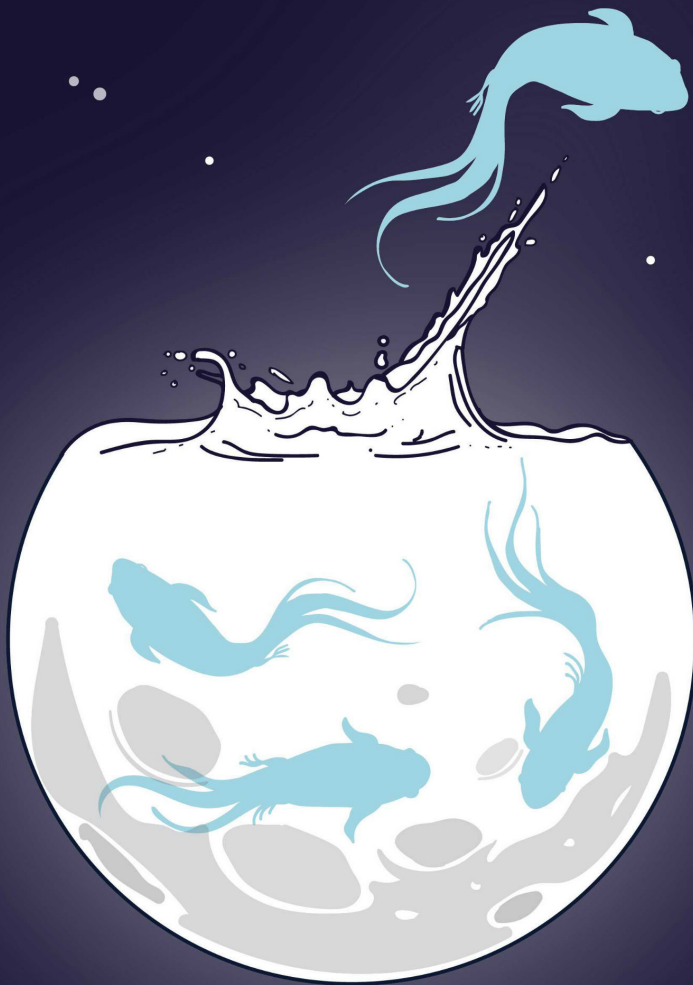


Dream Keeper

songs of sleep & visions



7 pm Saturday, March 2nd 2019

Westminster Presbyterian Church

3 pm Sunday, March 3rd 2019

Redeemer Presbyterian Church

Admission Free, Donations Accepted

INVERSION

ENSEMBLE

Note from the Artistic Director



Thank you for supporting Inversion Ensemble! Join me as we explore the fascinating topic of dreams through music. You may have expected a long program of sweet, delicate lullabies, but much of Inversion Ensemble's mission is to always deliver the unexpected. There are indeed a few lullabies, but also songs of frightening nightmares and romantic dreams. With incorporated elements of electronic music, jazz, microtonality, and a variety of instruments, sonically, this may be one of our most diverse concerts yet. If you've been with us since the beginning, I'm so glad you've once again come to refresh your ears with great new music! If you are hearing Inversion Ensemble for the first time, welcome! Thank you for taking a chance on listening to sounds you may have never experienced before. Enjoy the concert and don't be afraid to ask questions of the performers and composers afterwards about the music. We are all here to take a journey together and I want you to experience it as fully as possible. I am honored to share the conductor's podium for Dream Keeper with my good friend and colleague, Dr. Steven

Brennfleck. He is a wonderfully talented musician and a true gentleman.



Trevor F. Shaw
Artistic Director
Inversion Ensemble

Steven Brennfleck, Guest Conductor

Steven Brennfleck is conductor and founder of the Ars Longa Ensemble, based in Austin, TX (www.arslongaensemble.org). He has held positions with the Greater South Jersey Chorus, Montclair State University, Rutgers University-Camden, and Westminster Choir College's Chapel Choir and Conservatory Youth Chorale. A certified teacher of the Alexander Technique, he has led masterclasses and workshops for conductors and singers at ACDA – Georgia, Rider University, San Jose State University, Temple University, the University of Texas at Austin, and Westminster Choir College. Dr. Brennfleck received his terminal degree from the University of Texas at Austin, where he was conductor of the Women's Chorus and assistant conductor for the Choral Arts Society, the UT Chamber Singers, and the Butler Opera Center. Prior to moving to Austin, he served as Director of Choral Activities and Liturgical Music at DeSales University in Center Valley, PA where he led the University's three choral ensembles. Also an active professional singer, he performs regularly with opera companies and orchestras throughout the United States. www.stevenbrennfleck.com



Lena Gwendolyn Hill, Narrator



Lena Hill is an actor, voice over talent and singer in Austin, Texas. She's also a mama, partner, friend, confidant, shoulder to cry on and sister. She has over 15 years of performance experience. She's sung at fancy places like The Disney Concert Hall (LA), Meyerson Symphony Hall (Dallas), The Long Center (Austin) and Carnegie Hall (NY) and many many many not so fancy but equally delightful places. She has voiced for loads of fancy brands like Tuesday Morning, Tanger Outlets, Dillard's, HEB, Office Depot, Hilton,

Hampton Inn, World Market (many others) and many many many not so fancy but equally delightful brands. Most notably the character of Lefty in the video game Five Nights at Freddy's: Ultimate Custom Night. On the stage and screen, she's had the pleasure of working side-by-side with Oscar, Grammy, and Tony Award winners (such as Eric Whitacre, Hila Plitmann, Sally Kellerman, Shea Whigham, Andrea Burns and Greg Chun) and many many many incredibly talented people who have never won a darn thing. Twitter: @lenagwendolyn, Instagram: @lena.gwendolyn www.lenahill.com

Inversion Ensemble

Dream Keeper: songs of sleep & visions

March 2 & 3, 2019

Trevor F. Shaw, Artistic Director / Steven Brennfleck, Guest Conductor

*World Première Performance

Reading: *The First Dream*, Billy Collins

Dreamfall*.....Trevor Shaw (ASCAP)

Note:

In many ways, *Dreamfall* exists as an ambient piece. The melody is sparse, while the vocal lines are sung using non-language syllables. Each main section is repeated multiple times, so as to create an opportunity for a certain rhythmic and harmonic vibe to develop, as opposed to a clear journey down a distinct path. The overall effect is intended to emulate the feeling one gets for just a few moments when one is lying in bed, nearly asleep, as the chaotic thoughts of the day mellow into what will soon become the seamless flow of a dream state. The writing style is more influenced by the likes of Herbie Hancock, Jamiroquai, and Sade, than say, Herbert Howells. However, "Dreamfall" is a continuation of a long-term effort to build a collection of jazz-oriented works intended for performance by a "classical choir." It deliberately lacks, aside from the first measure, the improvisational qualities a "true" jazz choir piece would possess. - Trevor Shaw

Sweet and Low.....Stephen Barr

Text: *The Princess*, Alfred Lord Tennyson

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.
Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon:
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Note:

This work is a setting of Tennyson's beautiful poem from *The Princess*. The meaning of the lullaby is simple, straightforward, but powerful: the speaker/mother sings to her child and explains why the child's father isn't there to tell them good night (he has gone away "across the sea"). She comforts the child, assuring that all will be well—father will return soon—and urges the child to sleep. A second interpretation is that the speaker is addressing someone who has died and whom she wishes to be happy in the afterlife. The tone is sweet and sad, very low keyed, and the speaker insists on being reassuring, even though there is the sense that in fact, all is not well. - Stephen Barr

Asleep in a Blanket Spun of Energy*.....Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

Electronic Track, Trevor Shaw (ASCAP)

Text: Gimbiiskaabiimin Apane/We Are Returning Always - Margaret Noodin

Apii mooshkine aapkizid naawiying odo'shkiinzhig okomis ani-waabamowin zhooniyaabikwe mbikwaakwad oshki-nookaazhe giizhigong.	When the moon is full the center of grandmother's eye becomes a mirror, a ball of silver hair, the spot of new skin in the sky.
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Negweyab-aawanan babaamishimo misko-miin-aazhe miin-aazhe bimide miinwaa bingwiin oshki'anoongkewaad oshki'aadisookewaad.	The nebulae dance behind her raspberry light blueberry light gas and dust making new stars and new stories.
--	--

Dibikibagoneyaa temigad bakaan bagodakamig kina gojing gaawiin ningoji zaagigi, zaagakii epiichi bangishimod.	A dark hole discerned is a different wilderness everywhere and nowhere growing, expanding while collapsing.
--	--

Gimbiiskaabiimin apii nagamoying ginebigog, goon mitigwaanag, miigwanag nibwaakaaying abinoojiwiying nibaaying waaboowaning mashko'asabikeying.	And our song returns us snakes and snow twigs and twine we are wise bright infants asleep in a blanket spun of energy.
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Note:

Composed for Inversion Ensemble's March 2019 Dream Keeper concert, *Asleep in a Blanket Spun of Energy* for mixed chorus and electronic dance track evokes vivid imagery of Margaret Noodin's poem *We Are Returning Always*. The piece sets all of the English text and a few key words of the Anishinaabemowin text from the bilingual poem that beautifully captures a glimpse into the natural and celestial wonders of the Ojibwe world. The music reflects a taste of the syncopated embellished singing, pentatonic melodies, and steady drumbeat characteristic of Ojibwe music. The electronic dance track provides both a compelling rhythmic foundation and a fantastical sonic representations of the moon, nebulae, supernovae, aurora borealis, and the forests of the Ojibwe lands. - Adrienne Inglis

Reading: *Cat's Dream*, Pablo Neruda

Starry Night.....Marjorie Halloran

Text: Albert Zhao

Bitter pine and the sharp cold fills my nose
I glance down at the world below
Sleepy cottages, I taste the smoke
Chimneys puff and the wind blows.

I hear the murmurs of the town
And the pines rustling
Quiet birds settle down
And crickets begin chirping.

The world is dark at night, they say
But really, it's the other way
The sky shines bright with moon and stars
Tinkle like bells from afar.

I feel the mist settle in
The sky above slowly spins
The stars streak, the moon blurs
My mind itches where I cannot scratch.

Sun rises from the east and I know
I know what I must do
The world is dark at night, they say
But really, it's the other way.

Note:

Starry Night, written by Albert Zhao, was the winning poem of the 2016 Schola Cantorum Poetry Competition for high school students in Los Altos, CA. It was premiered by Schola Cantorum in June of 2017. The piece is relatively simple, to both preserve the integrity of the young poet and let the text speak without hiding it underneath layers of complexity. The poem paints a vivid picture of the scenery of Van Gogh's painting of the same name. Women sing the opening verse in unison (later, the men sing the same melody with harmony), almost like a nursery rhyme. The tune gains texture and harmonic instability during the verse about the sky spinning, where the narrator lets his mind wander to the mysteries of the universe. The juxtaposition of the differences in these sections tells a story of the struggle to balance appreciation for nature and simple things in life, while still wondering what else is out there. The refrain muses upon the way society sees this world as merely "dark," but the narrator and the artist both can see how full of life and color it really is. - Marjorie Halloran

Land of Nod.....Zachary Cairns

Ben Hummel, Violin Vanguel Tangarov, Clarinet Daniel Robertson, Percussion

Text: Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do —
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

Note:

The Land of Nod sets a poem by nineteenth-century Scottish poet Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson's poem contrasts the daily life of a child with that child's nighttime dreams. These dreams are, at once, fanciful, exciting, and frightening. The poem ends with Stevenson describing an experience likely familiar to all of us – a desire to return to the land of dreams, but an inability to remember those dreams in any detail. All that remains is a hint of the "curious music" heard while dreaming. Musically, *The Land of Nod* presents the music of the child's daytime life using familiar, traditional sounds – major and minor triads are heard, as well as slightly altered diatonic scales. On the other hand, the music associated with the child's dream-state is based primarily on whole-tone scales, which have been associated with impressionist music, sleep, and mystery since the late nineteenth century. But as nighttime ends and the dream music dissipates, we realize that the daytime music has been altered in subtle ways: the original melody has a difficult time finding its way back into our ears, and chords that once felt stable are now unstable. Finally, at the end of the piece, the clarinet and piano share a reminder of the "curious music" from the child's dream. - Zachary Cairns

Reading, *The Opal Dreamcave*, Katherine Mansfield

A Child's Nightmare*Robbie LaBanca

Ben Hummel, Violin

Vanguel Tangarov, Clarinet

Daniel Robertson, Percussion

Text: Robert Graves (1895-1985)

Through long nursery nights he stood
By my bed unwearying,
Loomed gigantic, formless, queer,
Purring in my haunted ear
That same hideous nightmare thing,
Talking, as he lapped my blood,
In a voice cruel and flat,
Saying for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

That one word was all he said,
That one word through all my sleep,
In monotonous mock despair.
Nonsense may be light as air,
But there's Nonsense that can keep
Horror bristling round the head,
When a voice cruel and flat
Says for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

He had faded, he was gone
Years ago with Nursery Land,
When he leapt on me again
From the clank of a night train,
Overpowered me foot and head,
Lapped my blood, while on and on
The old voice cruel and flat
Says for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..."

Morphia drowsed, again I lay
In a crater by High Wood:
He was there with straddling legs,
Staring eyes as big as eggs,
Purring as he lapped my blood,
His black bulk darkening the day,
With a voice cruel and flat,
"Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!..." he said, "Cat! ... Cat!..."

When I'm shot through heart and head,
And there's no choice but to die,
The last word I'll hear, no doubt,
Won't be "Charge!" or "Bomb them out!"
Nor the stretcher-bearer's cry,
"Let that body be, he's dead!"
But a voice cruel and flat
Saying for ever, "Cat! ... Cat! ... Cat!"

Note:

Composed for the March 2019 Dream Keeper concert by Inversion Ensemble, *A Child's Nightmare* is based on the haunting poem by Robert Graves in which he describes a dark, hulking entity that is ever present in the life of a man from childhood until his untimely death during the battles of WWI. Graves' evocative language guided the composition of this piece. Using only treble voices helps to set the text more as a Greek chorus who is narrating the events of this cursed child's existence. The piano's recurring obligatio represent the never-ending, persistent clock of life as the narrator of the story jumps forward in the timeline of this child's life. The violin, clarinet and percussion add atmospheric sounds throughout the work. A motif for the phrase "Cat!...Cat!...Cat!" returns over and over to illustrate that this shadow figure is inescapable. Finally, the battlefields of WWI are represented by the inclusion of the tune *It's a long way to Tipperary*; a British military tune popular during the war. - Robbie LaBanca

dreaming of zeno*.....Trevor Villwock

Cina Crisara, Trevor Villwock, Verlaine Shaw - Keyboardists

Text: Trevor Villwock

locked
always approaching
almost breaking

Note:

This piece was inspired by my (many) experiences with sleep paralysis, a sometimes-terrifying condition in which the mind is awake and aware but the body is unable to move. It usually occurs during either the process of going to sleep or the process of waking up. Despite usually being quite uncomfortable, this very strange liminal state somewhere between consciousness, dreaming, and unconsciousness is extremely fascinating to me. The title refers to the pre-Socratic philosopher Zeno of Elea, who is most famous for his paradoxes that suggest all motion is impossible and thus an illusion.

-Trevor Villwock

Reading: *I dream of you, to wake*, Christina Rossetti

My love waits.....Luke Mayernik

Text: Stephen Bock

My love waits beyond the dawn.	But until that hour I rest in arrested anticipation,
There she sleeps in silent slumber	Until those first beams of light lift night's dark shroud
Until the Fiery Orb of Morn	And point the way to the one for whom I wait.
Rises to embrace and renew the earth	Only then shall I be united with my love,
With its kiss of warmth and promise.	My love who waits beyond the dawn.

Note:

The alarm went off at 5:00 in the morning, but I was already awake when it rang. The hotel room was dark and everything was still - except for my spirit. Looking out across Los Angeles through a huge window of the hotel room, I could see the lights of night fade as the light of day approached. In just a few hours I would meet my love and we would be together. But for now, I could only watch darkness turn to dusk and then to day. In those early hours, she was waiting for me on the other side of dawn. The music that composer Luke Mayernik has brought to the poem matches perfectly the feelings that moment effectuated so many years ago. His melody is fresh and exciting— like a sunrise that awakened the sleeping metropolis on that morning. It's also timeless and eternal—like love itself. As the piece builds, the listener can feel the growing excitement of that February dawn. Near the end of the work, there is a repeated section which feels like the sun beginning to crest the horizon. The soloists are the rays that cut through the last residuals of night.

—Steve Bock (poet, publisher; Los Angeles, CA)

Reading: *Why I Wake Early*, Mary Oliver

Berceuse*.....Stephanie K. Andrews
Ben Hummel, Violin Vanguel Tanagrov, Clarinet Verlaine Shaw, Piano

Note:

Berceuse was written for the "Dream Keeper" concert to be performed by Inversion Ensemble of Austin, Texas in March of 2019. It is, as the title suggests, composed as a soothing lullaby, with a gentle rocking motion in the piano throughout. The clarinet and violin take turns playing lush melodic lines, often in parallel sixths, the sixth being an interval associated with consonance and pleasure. In a world wracked with discord, it is hoped that this lullaby for listeners and performers of all ages may bring comfort and solace. -Stephanie K. Andrews

Reading: *Dream Keeper*, Langston Hughes

Three Poems of William Blake.....Trevor Shaw (ASCAP)

I. A Dream

Text: William Blake (1757-1827)

A Dream

Once a dream did weave a shade
O'er my angel-guarded bed,
That an emmet lost its way
Where on grass methought I lay.

Troubled, wildered, and forlorn,
Dark, benighted, travel-worn,
Over many a tangle spray,
All heart-broke, I heard her say:

'Oh my children! do they cry,
Do they hear their father sigh?
Now they look abroad to see,
Now return and weep for me.'

Pitying, I dropped a tear:
But I saw a glow-worm near,
Who replied, 'What wailing wight
Calls the watchman of the night?

'I am set to light the ground,
While the beetle goes his round:
Follow now the beetle's hum;
Little wanderer, hie thee home!

II. Love's Secret

Love's Secret

Never seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! she did depart!

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

III. The Tyger

The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright, (repeat)

Note:

I wrote *Three Poems of William Blake* in late 2007/early 2008, a time when I was just beginning to reject tradition in my composition, instead infusing my music with my significant jazz background. In comparison to my most recent works, this may seem a subtle iteration of my compositional language. William Blake was a complex person. Both a brilliant poet and artist, he was radically religious, though he generally rejected organized religion, claiming to have experienced visions as a child. Because of the nature of his faith, seemingly secular poems, such as "A Dream" and "Tyger, Tyger" are filled with religious symbolism. "Love's Secret" represents the peculiar relationship Blake had with romantic love, as he had been turned down in response to his first marriage proposal, and claimed to have fallen in love with his eventual wife, Catherine, because she felt sorry for him. The poem takes on an unsettling nature in that light. This three-movement collection is my interpretation of William Blake, the complex human, piercing through his poetry on a personal, visceral level. The whimsical nature of dreams as a channel for divine guidance, the creepy ineptitude of unrequited love, and witnessing the presence of God embodied in a vicious predatory beast all create fantastic opportunities for a composer to relate by means of harmony. If you listen closely in "A Dream", you'll hear my enthusiasm for Wagner's music, including my use of his famous "Tristan Chord" (F-B-D#-G#). I was listening to an absurd amount of his music at the time. I also reluctantly admit that "Love's Secret" contains one of the only instances of a cluster chord in all of my works of music, but it seemed necessary to express the poem's tone. Finally, long-term Inversion Ensemble devotees will recognize the harmonic progression in the middle of "The Tyger" as one I revisited in 2017 for "Ode to a Tardigrade". - Trevor Shaw

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