



inversion
at the library



Please join Inversion in supporting our Inversion Cares partner, **Casa Marianella**.

Casa Marianella welcomes displaced immigrants and promotes self-sufficiency by providing shelter and support services. Our ultimate vision is that all immigrants arriving in Austin will have safe housing and access to the services they need to be successful.



INVERSION

presents

**inversion
at the library**

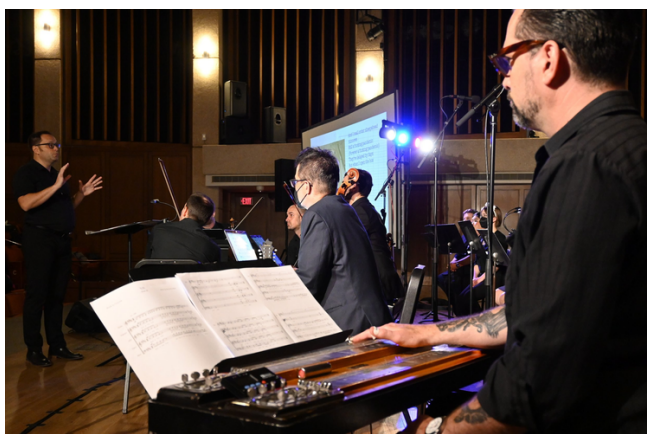
SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 2024 | 7:30PM
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ABOUT INVERSION

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.

Inversion is a proud member of the [C4 Network](#) and its [C4 Music Catalog](#).



PERSONNEL

ARTISTIC & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Trevor F. Shaw, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor
Katrina Saporsantos, Administrative Director and Associate Conductor
Adrienne Inglis, Outreach and Artist Manager
Carol Brown, Production Manager
Abigail Lewis, Intern

IN-HOUSE COMPOSERS

Adrienne Inglis	Benjamin Dia
Carol Brown	Evan Blaché
James Tecuatl-Lee	Robbie LaBanca
Steven Sérpa	Suzette Emberton
Trevor F. Shaw	Trevor Villwock

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jonathan Riemer, president
Lissa Anderson, secretary
Kim Vitray, treasurer
Ann Hume Wilson
Guillermo Delgado
Meredith Morrow

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

Catherine Spainhour

INTERN

Abigail Lewis

THE INVERSION FAMILY OF ENSEMBLES

INVERSION ENSEMBLE



Inversion Ensemble, directed by Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Trevor F. Shaw, is Inversion's original, professional mixed (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) ensemble dedicated to presenting innovative new choral works by mostly local composers.

DA CAPO



Da Capo is Inversion's professional ensemble for treble (soprano and alto) voices. Literally meaning "from the head", this ensemble showcases thoughtful and provocative new music that highlights treble voices. Da Capo is directed by Katrina Saporsantos.

THE INVERSION FAMILY OF ENSEMBLES

CODA



This incarnation of Inversion is made up primarily of volunteer singers aged 50 and better and includes a few members from our core group as well. Coda joined the Inversion Ensemble family in summer of 2018, and is directed by Trevor F. Shaw.

NOVA



Nova is a youth choir and young composer program that is part of Inversion, a collection of vocal ensembles dedicated to commissioning and performing timely new works by living composers. Nova is co-directed by Katrina Saporantos and Trevor F. Shaw

DIRECTORS



TREVOR F. SHAW
Artistic Director and
Principal Conductor

Trevor Shaw is an Austin-based composer, and the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Inversion Ensemble since its inception in 2016. He is also one of its Founding In-House composers. Under his leadership, Inversion has premiered over 170 new choral works and has expanded to include CODA, singers exclusively age 50+; Da Capo, professional treble voices; and Nova, a youth choir. Trevor is the co-founder and principal arranger for Tinsel, a professional a cappella jazz-oriented Christmas caroling company. He serves as the Director of Worship Arts for First United Methodist Church in Pflugerville, TX. www.trevorfshaw.com

INVERSION (INCLUDES INVERSION ENSEMBLE, CODA, NOVA)

Ben Tibbetts, piano

SOPRANO

Andrea B. Sieh
 Bonnie Bogovich
 Diane Skeel
 Dorothy Browning
 Elise Ragland
 Kaleigh Manning
 Ruby Manning
 Zoe Riemer

ALTO

Abigail Lewis
 Edward King
 Jennifer Hymel
 Jess Chapin
 Kim Vitray
 Lee Frierson-Stroud
 Lou Ann Lasher
 Lynn Janelle Lindsay
 Mary Lou Dye
 Patricia Combs
 Roxanne Elder
 Sherrille J Reed

TENOR

Bill Lasher
 Frank Adkins
 James Tecuatl-Lee
 Jonathan Riemer
 Nathaniel Fomby
 René Simone
 Tanush Kori
 Thomas Kolenda

BASS

Casey Papovich
 Daniel Robertson
 Evan Blaché
 Gregory A. Hilliard, Jr.
 Jim Nasby
 Rich Spainhour
 Richard Yu
 Steven Young
 Tucker Hymel-Pratt

DIRECTORS

Katrina Saporsantos is an award-winning soprano, a pianist, conductor, piano/voice instructor, and arts administrator. She is Inversion's Administrative Director and the Director of its professional treble chorus Da Capo. Choral credits include the Ateneo de Manila College Glee Club, AUIT Chamber Vocal Ensemble, and the Philippine-American Choral Project. Choral directing work includes high school treble choirs, church, community and semi-pro choruses in both the Philippines and New York City. Rina is the Assistant Director of Music and Children's Choir Conductor of the First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin. She actively performs as a solo singer and as part of multiple ensembles, including all-female vocal quintet VAMP. She holds music degrees from the University of the Philippines and Manhattan School of Music. www.katrinasaporsantos.com



KATRINA SAPORSANTOS
Da Capo Director and
Inversion Administrative
Director & Associate
Conductor

DA CAPO

Benjamin Dia, piano

SOPRANO 1

Cami Everitt
Carol Brown
Maureen Broy Papovich
McKenna King
Meredith Winford

SOPRANO 2

Christa Tumlinson
Jennifer Inglis Hudson
Katrina Saporsantos
Mikaela Pace

ALTO 1

Adrienne Inglis
Bethany Ammon
Deirdre Spainhour
Jennifer Hymel
Rosa Mondragón Harris

ALTO 2

Artha Weaver
Frances Jimenez
Rebecca Stidolph
Wravan Godsoe

PROGRAM

*world premiere

Vera Lugo

Leonora

Evan Blaché (ASCAP)

World in Color*

William V. Malpede

Comrades and Lovers

traditional Colombian/Venezuelan
collected by Atahualpa Yupanqui
arr. Emilio Solé

Duerme negrito

solo: Katrina Saporantos, soprano

The Combined Ensembles of Inversion

Trevor F. Shaw, conductor

Ben Tibbetts, piano

PROGRAM

*world premiere

Samih Choukeir, arr. Shireen Abu-Khader
solo: Katrina Saporsantos

Lao Rahal Soti

Chen Yi

Thinking of My Home

Nilo Alcala
djembe: Adrienne Inglis

Papanok A Lakitan

Elise Witt, arr. Michael Holmes
soli: Jennifer Hymel, Bethany Ammon, Cami Everitt,
Rebecca Stidolph, Mikaela Pace, Christa Tumlinson,
Carol Brown; triangle: Jennifer Inglis Hudson;
shaker: Artha Weaver; gong: Katrina Saporsantos

My Journey Yours

Benjamin Dia (ASCAP)
soli: Rosa Mondragón Harris and Frances Jimenez

Canto del viajero

Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)
soli: Bethany Ammon, Wravan Godsoe,
Maureen Papovich, Deirdre Spainhour

The Way We Meet

Melissa Dunphy

New Dreams

Mari Esabel Valverde

Skin

Kareem Roustom
soli: Maureen Papovich, McKenna King,
Meredith Winford, Cami Everitt

Hot Tea, Mint and Olives
I. Invitation to Tea
II. Alphabets of My Life
III. Song of the Zaytoon
Trees (O Live!)

Da Capo

Katrina Saporsantos, conductor
Benjamin Dia, piano

PROGRAM

*world premiere

Jimmy Kachulis

African Violet

2024 Sandra Fivecoat Memorial

Composition Contest winner

percussion: Jordan Walsh

The Combined Ensembles of Inversion

Trevor F. Shaw, conductor

Ben Tibbetts, piano

INVERSION AT THE LIBRARY PERSONNEL

Jordan Walsh, sound

Áine Spainhour, audio recording

Catherine Spainhour, audio and video recording

Emilio Torres, audio and video recording assistant

Adrienne Inglis, audio and video editing

Melanie Lewis, Volunteer Coordinator and House Manager

Brit Trinité and Seaufy Peg Frey, stage assistants

INVERSION AT THE LIBRARY

Welcome to “Inversion at the Library.”

Tonight, you are witnessing a first in Inversion history: a concert that combines all four vocal ensembles under Inversion—our flagship professional mixed chorus Inversion, our professional treble chorus Da Capo, our 50 and better group Coda, and our youth choir Nova.

This evening will feature new music from different cultures around the world that revolves around topics such as the various stages of life, community, diaspora, leaving, coming home, and belonging. It is about wanting to find our places in our community and the world, exploring some of the world's many cultures, and defining what makes us feel at home.

This evening will also feature Da Capo, our professional treble (soprano/alto) choir, under the debut directorship of Katrina Saporantos. Their music will focus on common lived experiences by immigrants. These songs, many of them by BIPOC composers and poets, take us through different sound worlds that weave together a tapestry of shared joys, heartaches, hopes, and dreams. Collectively, they will be presenting new music that makes you smile, think, and feel. Da Capo will be premiering songs by two of Inversion’s in-house composers Adrienne Inglis and Benjamin Dia, while the combined family of ensembles will be presenting the world premiere of a work by in-house composer Evan Blaché.

We are honored that you are here with us tonight, and hope you find something in our program that you resonate with.

LEONORA

by Vera Lugo

When no one will know when you go to bed, why should you? Leonora came to life in three stages: first as a poem written during the 2011 Southwest blackout, then as a song for toy piano and solo voice, and finally as a choral piece featuring a cyclical ostinato and tongue-in-cheek yawning. Leonora is a little girl who doesn't want to go to bed; meanwhile, the omniscient moon watches over the Earth. It is a diorama of the small and the large, the micro and the macro, humanity and the universe. — Vera Lugo

Leonora wept and said
"All the world is in my head!
How am I to sleep?" she cried,
As the world went slowly by.

All the colors, lights, and sounds
Keep the girl from settling down
Into her waiting bed
Will she ever rest her head?

No one in the world will know
When she finally sleeps; and so
Leonora cries and says,
"I will never go to bed!"

In dreams we see ourselves from a different perspective
And the things that we knew have changed
But somewhere beyond the horizon that glows
The moon is the same

She watches us sleep
She follows our stories
She knows of our triumphs and fears,
And keeps them safe

And nobody knows of the moon's devotion
As she glides over the ocean

But one little face is watching her back
Leonora is watching her back from the twilight of sleep!
She heaves a great sigh and opens her eyes wide

Leonora cries and says,
"All the world's STILL in my head!
Why must I be forced to sleep
When the moon is watching me?"

No one but the moon will know
When she
finally sleeps and so
Leonora cries and says,
"I will never go to bed!"

WORLD IN COLOR*

by Evan Blaché (ASCAP) | Text by Trevor F. Shaw (ASCAP)

I felt compelled by this text because the message coincides with a lot of my beliefs, and the message of "world in color" especially coincides with my synesthesia when I compose.

I seek purpose and connection with my world.
I wish my place in it was more obvious.
I am praised for my uniqueness,
But it's that which isolates me.
Sometimes I wish that I was simple,
And could go through life unquestioning, Never desiring anything better.
In ignorance there is safety,
But that isn't who I am.
I need the ones who love me
(And I know you love me most)
To grant me understanding,
And remind me of my worth.
For you have opened up my eyes
To see the world in color.
In moments of relief I know
That in you, I am home.

*world premiere

COMRADES AND LOVERS

by William V. Malpede | Text by Walt Whitman

This piece is based upon “No Labor-Saving Machine,” by Walt Whitman, from his celebrated and beloved “Leaves of Grass.” The lyrics express ideas about achievements in life. What might we leave behind for future generations; an invention, a monetary grant, a deed, or a literary work? Ultimately, in this poem, one leaves a gift of music; a beautiful song that rings through the air to be captured by the hearts of people who love.

The steady accompaniment in the piano is meant to symbolize a walk through life, with the various key, and tonal center shifts representing those challenges, joys, and surprises that our journey brings us. A meter and key change occurs at the word “carols,” followed by a crescendo to “vibrating through the air.” This section symbolizes a realization of, and love for that thing which we indeed may have left behind for humanity. This text is repeated a cappella, and rubato, in a loving and dramatic setting. The piece briefly returns to the steady ‘walk’ in the accompaniment, and comes to a final major chord resolve with an undulating, shimmering cluster in the voices.
— William V. Malpede

No labor-saving machine,
Nor discovery have I made,
Nor will I be able to leave behind me any wealthy bequest
to found hospital or library,
Nor reminiscence of any deed of courage for America,
Nor literary success nor intellect; nor book for the book-shelf,
But a few carols vibrating through the air I leave,
For comrades and lovers.

DUERME NEGRITO

traditional Colombian/Venezuelan collected by Atahualpa Yupanqui
arr. Emilio Solé

In this lullaby composed by Atahualpa Yupanqui, one of the most popular Latin American composers of the 1960's and early 1970's, the little black child is given impossible promises and warned of dire consequences, while the sad plight of the sick, hard-working mother is depicted in word and song.

According to our translator Carlos Lopez, "Negrito literally means 'little black one,' or, in modern usage, simply 'darling' or 'dear little one.' But other words in the text leave no doubt about the setting of this 'black' lullaby. The omission of the 'r' in trae' (traer), ce'do (cerdo), and ca'ne (carne) and the omission of the 's' in e'ta (esta) and fre'ca (fresca) all reflect the black spanish pronunciation of the uneducated slave culture. The references to the brutal practice of cutting a person's foot off to prevent escape and to the sick mother working hard in the fields and not getting paid can only be understood in terms of the dehumanizing conditions slaves endured for centuries in many parts of the New World." – Maria Guinand

Duerme, duerme, negrito [Sleep, sleep, little black one,]

Que tu mama e'tá en el campo, negrito [your mama's in the fields, little one.]

Drume, drume mobila [sleep, little one]

Que tu mama está en el campo, mobila [your mama's in the fields, little one.]

Te va a traé' codo'nice' para tí [She's going to bring quail for you]

Te va a traé' rica fruta fre'ca para tí [She's going to bring fresh fruit for you]

Te va a traé' car'ne de ce'do para tí [She's going to bring pork for you]

Te va a traé' mucha' cosa' para tí [She's going to bring many things for you.]

Y si el negro no se duerme [And if the black one doesn't go to sleep,]
Viene e' diablo blanco [the white devil will come]
¡Y zás! Le come la patita, chica bú [and zap! he'll eat your little foot, chica bú;]
Apura, chica bú! [hurry, chica bú!]

Duerme, duerme, negrito [Sleep, sleep, little black one,]
Que tu mama e'tá en el campo, negrito [your mama's in the fields, little
one.]Trabajando duramente, trabajando, sí [She's working hard, working, yes]
Trabajando y no le pagan, trabajando, sí [working and they don't pay her,
working, yes]

Trabajando y va tosiendo, trabajando, sí [working and she's coughing, working,
yes]Pa'l negrito chiquitito [for her sweet little black one]
Pa'l negrito, sí [for her sweet little black one, yes]

LAO RAHAL SOTI

by Samih Choukeir; arr. Shireen Abu-Khader

Solo — Katrina Saporsantos

Shireen Abu-Khader is a Palestinian Jordanian Canadian composer, arranger, conductor, and music educator who, through her organization Dozan World, introduces to the international community the music of the beloved Levant (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq) region. She first heard Lao Rahal Soti, the protest song by Samih Choukeir, during her work in Ramallah in 1998. The song originally had a fast but march-like feel, yet the melody and the lyrics registered in her mind like a calm, quiet, meditative moment; the words, especially, resonated deeply with her beliefs. With this in mind, she created an arrangement that was quieter and more hopeful. She personally dedicates this song to the Palestinian ongoing struggle for freedom and dignity, and hopes that the haunting melody of this song opens a space for those who have felt marginalized due to socio-political situations to be heard.

If my voice departs, your throats (i.e. voices) will not
I look unto tomorrow and my heart is with you
If the singer goes (dies), the songs will remain
bringing together the broken and suffering hearts

THINKING OF MY HOME

by Chen Yi | Text based on an ancient Chinese poem by Li Bai

Thinking of My Home, a work for treble voices, was commissioned by the American Composers Forum as a part of its ChoralQuest® Program. In this piece, she sets to music a famous Chinese poem with the same title by Li Bai, a poet during the Tang Dynasty. Dr. Chen is a prolific composer who is a master at blending both Chinese and Western musical traditions; *Thinking of My Home* is a perfect example of this as, throughout the piece, we hear sounds reminiscent of the Chinese two-stringed instrument *erhu* and the nose flute woven into traditional Western choral voice production.

Moonlight in front of my bed,
Is it frost on ground I guess?
Lift up my eyes, gazing at the moon
Low down my head, thinking of my home

PAPANOK A LAKITAN

by Nilo Alcala | Text based on a Maguinadanaoan chant

djembe — Adrienne Inglis

Papanok A Lakitan by multi-awarded Filipino American composer Nilo Alcala is but one of the many works he has written that is a testament to how he is carving a legacy for Philippine Arts through his music. The song is unapologetically Filipino. Sung in Maguindanaon, a Southern Philippine language, the piece uses the human voice to mimic the sounds of a kulintang, a set of eight tuned knobbed gongs played with two sticks of softwood. The work's rhythmic and percussive patterns act as a drone that a simple melody is superimposed on. The interlocking rhythms typically found in Philippine indigenous music are also present in this virtuosic piece.

Messenger bird,
Messenger bird,
Tell my beloved I am not too far away.

MY JOURNEY YOURS

by Elise Witt, arr. Michael Holmes| Text by Elise Witt with the staff of Refugee Family Services in Clarkston, GA

Soli — Jennifer Hymel, Bethany Ammon, Cami Everitt, Rebecca Stidolph, Mikaela Pace, Christa Tumlinson, Carol Brown; triangle: Jennifer Inglis Hudson; shaker: Artha Weaver; gong: Katrina Saporantos

My Journey Yours was originally commissioned by a multi-disciplinary arts project of the same name with Refugee Family Services in Clarkston, GA. There are three sections to the piece that represent refugees and immigrants moving away from their homeland, the seemingly endless days of waiting, and finally the challenge of creating a new life in America. It is a musical collage of sorts in that the composer Elise Witt took musical phrases from songs refugees remembered from their childhood (like lullabies, children's songs, and musical games), placed the words "my journey yours" in their native language over these musical phrases, and then stacked them on top of each other. The ending of the piece represents their new life and home in the US, with everyone telling about their shared journey in a language they all can now call theirs.

My journey, your journey, my journey, yours.

Sung in English, Kurdish, Arabic, Mano (Liberia), Amharic (Ethiopia), Bosnian, Vietnamese, and Somali

CANTO DEL VIAJERO*

by Benjamin Dia (ASCAP) | Text excerpted from the poem of the same title by Jose P. Rizal

Soli — Rosa Mondragón Harris and Frances Jimenez

Canto del viajero is a musical setting of excerpts from the poem of the same name by Filipino writer and polymath Dr. Jose P. Rizal. In the poem, Rizal, who used the power of his pen to fight the oppression of Filipinos during Spain's 333-year colonization, talks about anticipating the loneliness of being a stranger, all alone in his homeland as he was about to go back to the Philippines after many years of living in Europe. The lyrics had a very deep impact with composer Benjamin Dia, so he felt very drawn to use it for this commission. Musically, he conceptualized the work to feel like a soliloquy. He envisioned a strong, emotion-filled voice (reminiscent of Argentine singer Mercedes Sosa) to take on the role of the poet who sings about their fear, loneliness, and anxiety; a second solo voice of different timbre that echoes the poet's sentiment; and for a lush bed of sound from the chorus that provides a strong harmonic anchor and variation in the texture of the work.

Dia very skillfully crafts the music to reflect emotions in the text. The melody has a never-tiring forward motion that can be interpreted as time moving so quickly. The shifting meter from 6/4 to 5/4 underscores the underlying feelings of discomfort and uncertainty that the poet feels, while the sixteenth notes that can mostly be found in the lines of the altos sounds like a heart-racing. When the chorus takes on their "solo" portion where they sing about the poet returning to their country, it feels heavier, and like the "committee in one's head", the voice of worry or anxiety or fear, is getting louder. This is a work that leans very heavily on the loneliness and agony built into the text. These feelings, for someone who's been away from their country for so long, never goes away no matter how many times they try to convince themselves that they're way past them.

In the final verse sung by the poet, we hear them saying one thing out loud while all that time, underneath them, their "committee" is repeatedly saying a very different thing: "*amores perdidos, sepulcros, no mas*", that they'll be coming home to a country of "...perished loves, and graves, nothing more".

Dry leaf that flies at random
till it's seized by a wind from above:
so lives on earth the wanderer,
without north, without soul, without country or love!

Impelled by a hand invisible,
he shall wander from place to place;
memories shall keep him company
of loved ones, of happy days.

The pilgrim shall return to his country,
shall return perhaps to his shore;
and shall find only ice and ruin,
perished loves, and graves nothing more.

Begone, wanderer! In your own country,
a stranger now and alone!
Let the others sing of loving,
who are happy but you, begone!

Begone, wanderer! Look not behind you
nor grieve as you leave again.
Begone, wanderer: stifle your sorrows!
the world laughs at another's pain.

*world premiere

THE WAY WE MEET*

by Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP) | Text by Margaret Noodin

Soli — Bethany Ammon, Wravan Godsoe, Maureen Papovich, and Deirdre Spainhour

Commissioned by Inversion Da Capo for its Inversion at the Library concert in April 2024, *The Way We Meet* (2024) sets excerpts from the poem of the same name by Margaret Noodin from her book of bilingual Anishinaabemowin/English poetry, *Weweni*. The narrative spans the creation arc, from the beginning of time through the emergence of organisms and proliferation of species. The challenge we face is living together peacefully with all beings in order to leave behind a legacy of understanding and love. The piece opens with a bit of an uncomfortable pentatonic scale and haunting vocal solos, followed by G minor pentatonic with a tenacious rhythmic ostinato, closing with rich divisi harmonies and aleatoric texture.

Long ago in the mixing
we were shaken
in every direction
different children
of the sky and the land.

To survive now we must
be at peace in our hearts
Nisidotawdizoying / understand one another
and bravely remember
we are all, one by one, cousins.

Let's meet one another
here now on earth before
we become heavenly ancestors
wearing a necklace of stars
visible to our heirs.

NEW DREAMS

by Melissa Dunphy | Text by Melissa Dunphy inspired by the work of Grace Lee Boggs

Melissa Dunphy is a composer of political and vocal art (classical) music based in Philadelphia. New Dreams was born out of her admiration for the work of the Chinese American civil rights activist Grace Lee Boggs who dedicated her life to political causes, particularly the Black American struggle, and to the question of how one can create a better society and a better world. Melissa kept getting the song "Amazing Grace" stuck in her head and for a long time resisted incorporating it into the music, until she watched a documentary on Boggs where she pauses under a wall with a graffiti tag that read "Amazing Grace" and roars with laughter. After that, she felt as though she was given permission from beyond the grave to quote the hymn.

New dreams are born in questions.
How do we transform ourselves?
How do we transform our world?
What do we need?
What do we want?
What is the difference?
How do we reconnect with the rhythms of nature?
Should we do something just because we can?
What is the purpose of education?
What does it mean to care?
How do we create community?
Why is community a revolutionary idea?
How do we re-civilize our society?
How do we grow our souls?
How do we take heart of grace?

SKIN

by Mari Esabel Valverde | Text by Naomi Shihab Nye

Mari Esabel Valverde is a Texas-based trans Latina composer who is making an incredible mark on the American choral scene with her genius take on harmony, texture, pacing, and careful yet bold setting of thought-provoking text. Originally commissioned for a consortium of 14 high school, collegiate, community and professional choral ensembles, *Skin* is Mari's expert setting of the poem "Two Countries" by the Palestinian German American poet Naomi Shihab Nye. Mari's composer note about *Skin* sets the perfect tone to the piece. She writes: "'Skin' addresses themes of healing, resilience, passage, and travel. Without mention of any particular name, age, gender, or race, the protagonist 'Skin' acknowledges past traumas and ultimately expresses a profound feeling of gratitude 'that there are travelers, that people go places larger than themselves.' ... A single line of text is sung twice, 'Love means you breathe in two countries,' in honor of the two worlds indicated in the title of the poem. ...because we have the capacity to heal, we need not abandon a part of ourselves when we move to nourish another part of humanity thirsting for life."

Skin remembers how long the years grow
when skin is not touched, a gray tunnel
of singleness, feather lost from the tail
of a bird, swirling onto a step,
swept away by someone who never saw.
it was a feather. Skin ate, walked,
slept by itself, knew how to raise a
see-you-later hand. But skin felt.
it was never seen, never known as
a land on the map, nose like a city,
hip like a city, gleaming dome of the mosque
and the hundred corridors of cinnamon and rope.

Skin had hope, that's what skin does.
Heals over the scarred place, makes a road.
Love means you breathe in two countries.
And skin remembers — silk, spiny grass,
deep in the pocket that is skin's secret own.
Even now, when skin is not alone,
it remembers being alone and thanks something larger
that there are travelers, that people go places
larger than themselves.

HOT TEA, MINT AND OLIVES

by Kareem Roustom | Text by Ibtisam Barakat

Soli — Maureen Papovich, McKenna King, Meredith Winford, Cami Everitt

Hot Tea, Mint is a multi-movement work by Kareem Roustom, a Syrian American composer whose genre-crossing collaborations include works for symphony orchestras, popular music, and contemporary dance. In his setting of these poems by Palestinian American author and poet Ibtisam Barakat, Roustom includes elements of classical and folk music from the Arab world, specifically the Near East. He employs vocalizations of hand drum (darbouka) and tambourine (riqq) sounds in the first movement, blends Arabic and English alphabets in the second, and bases the third movement on a Lebanese and Palestinian folk dance called the dabke'. The resulting work is a joyous celebration of the pluralism of identities immigrants and refugees forever hold.

I. Invitation to Tea

I write for my heart
Has become a country
And I want all people
To live in it.

I make space by emptying
All comers of fear,
I make peace by
Making a cup of tea
For my story and yours,

Hot tea and mint
I have meant to invite you over
To my heart.

Do you like your tea
With sugar?

II. Alphabets of My Life

I live my life
In two alphabets
On the line
Arabic runs
From right to left
On the line English runs
From left to right
Two worlds, breathless, Running towards
Each other ...
It's a matter of time
Before they meet
And rest,
In each other's hearts.

III. Song of the Zaytoon Trees* (O Live!)

Tell me who you are
And what your heart loves
I will tell you who I am and
Who my father was.

He built homes
And loved Zaytoon trees.
O'live. O live. Forever. O live!

I build hope,
Tend the orchard
And the song of the Zaytoon
That runs through the leaves
And returns—
O live! O live!

*Zaytoon trees are olive trees

AFRICAN VIOLET

by Jimmy Kachulis

2024 Sandra Fivecoat Memorial Composition Contest winner

percussion — Jordan Walsh

African Violet is a musical depiction of the african violet flower, as a symbol of the indomitable African spirit that has overcome so much. It is one of the fruits of my long term research into the music and culture of the Ewe people of Southern Ghana. Various versions of the themes are combined in multiple counterpoints on traditional Ewe percussion parts, orchestrated for trombones. Call and Response patterns based on Ewe concepts happen among the instruments and between solo instruments and the ensemble, bringing the entire piece to a thrilling climax. Although initially designed to be sung by a singer primarily of African descent, it can be sung by any singers, as a tribute to the resilience of the human spirit to confront and, ultimately, to triumph over any obstacles. It's dedicated to my teacher, Master Drummer Godwin Agbeli of the Ewe people.

Verse 1

Fragile seed planted deep
In the ancient soil
Soon you grew from your roots
to the sun

Chorus

African Violet tell your story
African Violet come transform me
You're the one who can guide my light, my life
My African Violet

Chorus

Verse 3

Now the time has come to climb
To the sky
Show the world, show us all
What you are

Chorus

Coda

Inspire me my African Violet

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UPCOMING CONCERTS

Adelina the Jester

Saturday, June 22, 2024 at 7:30 PM

Sunday, June 23, 2024 at 3 PM

Austin Scottish Rite Theater

207 W 18th St, Austin, TX 78701

inversion presents



Music by Andrew Grainger
Libretto by Katie Bender

Adelina the Jester

A chamber oratorio inspired
by the Domesday Book

adelinathejester.com Produced by Lissa Beth Anderson (lissa1453@gmail.com)

Saturday, June 22, 2024, at 7:30 PM
Sunday, June 23, 2024, at 3:00 PM

Adelina the Jester is the title of a brand new chamber oratorio featuring Inversion Ensemble with the libretto by playwright Katie Bender and music by composer Andrew Grainger. More information at www.adelinathejester.com.



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