



7pm, Saturday, 9/30 - Westminster Presbyterian Church
3208 Exposition Blvd, Austin

3pm, Sunday, 10/1 - First United Methodist Church
500 E. Pecan St, Pflugerville

The Universal Chamber

Anteludium:

- *Pájaros*

Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

Adrienne Inglis, Flute

I. Terra: Home

- *Canciones para una cosa y otra*

Carlos Pérez Tabares

Mary Elizabeth Ashton, Soprano

- *Espejo**

Carlos Cordero

- Neither Cruel Nor Kind

Robbie LaBanca

- *While the Sun Still Spends his Fabulous Money**

- *The Stars Are**

Laura Mercado-Wright, Mezzo-Soprano

Shana Norton, Harp

II. Caelum: The Vast Sky

- *Evening Star**

Michał Ziótkowski

- *Clouds Ephemeral*

Karen Siegel

III. Ascensionem: The Journey

- *Amata**

Alexander Johnson

- *Beyond**

Trevor Shaw

- *I. Voyages*

- *II. Darkness*

- *III. Understanding*

- *Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector*

Terry Riley

IV. Cum Oculis Aperire: Solitude

- *Let Everything Happen**

Stephanie K. Andrews

- *Hymnus Iuppiter**

Robbie LaBanca

Keely J. Rhodes, Mezzo-Soprano

**World Premiere Performance*

From the composers

Pájaros for solo flute and strings

As an avid bird lover, the composer sets some of her favorite bird songs to music in *Pájaros* (“Birds”) for solo flute and strings. The birds featured in this piece nest every spring in the Hill Country of Texas, west of Austin. As daylight turns to dusk, the Bewick's Wren's tuneful song unfolds over an Argentine *tango* rhythm, accompanied by the Northern Cardinal, Lesser Goldfinch, and Northern Bobwhite. A Red-tailed Hawk startles all the songbirds into momentary silence. As they resume their singing, dusk fades into darkness and various insects start their incessant chirping. The mysterious Chuck-will's-widow sings its mournful call all night long, set here to a Venezuelan *pasaje* rhythm. When day breaks, the Golden-cheeked Warbler sings its two songs from the treetops to stake out its territory and attract a mate. The Cuban *danzón* provides the backdrop for its flirtatious tunes.

— Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)

Canciones para una cosa y otra (“Songs for one thing and another”)

My parents always supported me in my decision of becoming a musician. Especially my father, who is an artist himself. Anyway, finding myself in the midst of the struggle, I wondered how such a strong, down-to-earth and strict person could be the first one encouraging me to keep going down this uncertain path. One day I bumped into one of his old poetry notebooks and the mystery was solved: I was able to see a more human and sensitive side of him, and most importantly, I was able to see myself and trace the spiritual bond that connects us. From that notebook I have chosen the three poems that are part of this cycle. All of them are short, acting almost as aphorisms, yet full of color and beautiful images that connect divinity with the deepest human angst: cosmos and microcosmos. The first song depicts a blurred humanity mingling with light and colors of the motherland. The second one sets a storm free in that kingdom of light succumbing to one's innermost angst. The third one sublimates the effect of the first two by having the moon (the soloist) sing a song that leads one's return to God. — Carlos Pérez Tabares

Espejo

Espejo (“Mirror”) is a composition for mixed choir (divisi), string orchestra and harp. Nature has always been a part of my life and my compositional voice. In this particular case, I wanted to musically draw what the Venezuelan poetess Zulay Sanabria had perfectly described in her poem of the same title (“Mirror”). As I read the poem I could feel that she was talking to the earth, to the water, to the openness. She creates in her writing a place

with no barriers, no walls. A place free of abysses that leads us to travel deeper using our imagination. — Carlos Cordero

Neither Cruel nor Kind: Songs for Accompanied Voice

“Nature is not cruel, pitiless, indifferent. This is one of the hardest lessons for humans to learn. We cannot admit that things might be neither good nor evil, neither cruel nor kind, but simply callous -- indifferent to all suffering, lacking all purpose.” — Richard Dawkins

The title of this song cycle comes from the quote above from British ethologist Richard Dawkins. I chose this title because it speaks directly to the subject matter found in the texts of the pieces. Each piece deals with the concept of nature’s indifference to the will and wishes of humankind in their own unique way and I found it intriguing how poets separated by lifetimes and experiences came to the same conclusion.

I. The stars are

The text for this piece comes from a poem by Samuel Menashe (1925-2011). What I found so inspiring about this text was how clearly and succinctly he moves the reader from the bleak ideas of man’s inability to change the stars to the almost euphoric sense of surrender in accepting our fate. The final line “why sigh for a star?, better bay at the moon” struck a chord in me that guided the creation of this piece. I have used a recitative compositional style for the pensive and questioning opening and then transitioned into a more lyric style as the narrator surrenders to the universe. — Robbie LaBanca

II. While the Sun Still Spends his Fabulous Money

This piece is based on the text of Kenneth Patchen (1911-1972), a member of the San Francisco “City Lights Poets.” Although categorized in some collections as a love poem, I found the text far more in line with that of the indifference of nature. The concept that humanity spends its time in the pursuit of truth and justice while the stars are fading away puts into perspective how small and insignificant our actions can seem. During one of the darkest times in American history sprung forth the soulful and gut-wrenching musical style known to many as Spirituals. I have borrowed heavily from that style in the vocal line for this piece and paired it with a steady blocked chords that never relent for the duration of the piece. The juxtaposition of the vocal line and accompaniment serve as a way to paint the text in this musical form contrasting the relentless march of the universe underneath our mournful cries of condemnation. — Robbie LaBanca

Clouds Ephemeral

My fascination with clouds stems from experiences among them, in a cloud forest in Costa Rica and on a mountain road in northern California. At these high elevations, there is little resemblance to sea-level fog—the clouds have shape and movement just like when they are far out of reach. My tendency to view clouds through a poetic lens is countered by the perspective of my friend, a climate scientist who once looked out the window in an airplane and said “there’s my work.” The Latin scientific names of clouds and the excerpts from cloud definitions represent this objective, scientific approach to understanding clouds and our environment. This objective viewpoint coexists with the magical, imaginative viewpoint of a child looking up at the sky, finding shapes in the Clouds. Like clouds, the harmony in *Clouds Ephemeral* shifts in and out of clear forms, simultaneously in constant motion yet almost still. The rhythm also embodies this nebulous quality, constantly changing meter throughout most of the piece. The scientific names of clouds are heard throughout, while the cloud definitions layer underneath, chant-like in the men. The poem layers over the cloud names, in a slow, graceful melody sung by the women. — Karen Siegel

Amata — Latin, (adj.) meaning *loved* or *beloved*

In this simple musical statement of unrelenting love, what begins as anguish at being apart from a loved one transforms into optimism for an eventual reunion. This piece was composed for Amy, with love. — Alexander Johnson

Beyond

Beyond is a tribute to three of my favorite astrophysicists, Carolyn Porco, Amy Mainzer, and the late Vera Rubin. While I’ve directly set their respective words to music, my primary objective was to capture each woman’s noted individual scientific focus. I didn’t initially intend to exclusively quote female scientists, but once I realized I had done so, I added the work title, *Beyond*. The name conveys not only the obvious notion of space travel, but it is a token of my reverence for the many women who went “beyond” societal barriers to make space exploration possible.

Carolyn Porco (*Voyages*) is well known for her work on the mission of the Voyager Spacecraft and its observations of Saturn and the Saturnian moons. The static nature of the first movement symbolizes the perceived endlessness of space as the Voyager Spacecraft travelled through the solar system. The relatively short theme appears in retrograde near the ending to represent Voyager’s change of linear motion after being grabbed by the gravity of the ringed gas giant.

Vera Rubin (*Darkness*) is famous for her work concerning the existence and properties of dark matter, a substance which is both invisible and abundant. The mechanical repetition of the melodic line, simply based on the natural minor scale, is followed by light, conversational rhythms over Major harmonies. Rubin's way of explaining mysterious, seemingly incomprehensible theories about an insidious invisible force to the general public was delightfully matter-of-fact and that, to me, was exceptionally appealing.

Finally, Amy Mainzer (*Questions*) is fairly close to my own age, but she has already established herself as one of NASA's stars, no pun intended. Mainzer is part of the management team at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, which carries out NASA's spacecraft missions. While "Voyages" suggests the monotony of space as a spacecraft travels tremendous distances between planets, "Questions" hints at the reality that those same human-made objects actually move at unimaginable speeds through space, despite any illusion otherwise. "Questions" is also inspired by the thrill of constantly expanding the reach of humanity far beyond the earth. — Trevor Shaw

Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector

In 1980, when asked by David Harrington of Kronos Quartet to compose some music for their, at that time, very young group, I chose this work as a starting point. It had been over ten years since I had written any music on paper as I had occupied myself at that time with keyboard improvisation and the study of North Indian Raga but I felt the atmosphere of this work would be very appropriate for strings. I was confident that the module construction of the music would allow the quartet members freedom to use their performance skills to enhance its basic melodic and rhythmic framework and to give it a shape that would reflect their insights regarding its musical content and feeling. — Terry Riley

Let Everything Happen

Let Everything Happen is a setting of a text by Rainer Maria Rilke for four part women's voices, harp, and cello. It strives to shed light upon those times in our lives when we find that whatever it is we are facing - be it good, evil, or something in between - is an existential challenge. Even the profoundly beautiful can be, as one Greek notion suggests, terrifying. It is my hope that this work will speak encouragement to any soul struggling to persevere regardless of what may happen, and inspire us to reach out to one another for strength and community. — Stephanie K. Andrews

Hymnus Iuppiter

This piece utilizes an audio track of background noises from space, more specifically the radiation feedback from the surface of Jupiter that has been enhanced to be audible to the human ear. I have utilized two text settings for this piece. The first is a quote from Marcus Aurelius who comments that “The universe is transformation, life is opinion.” This perfectly sums up the feeling of vastness and isolation evoked by the image of the giant of Jupiter floating in space hundreds of thousands of miles away from Earth. The second text is from the Orphic Hymns act as a song of reverence to the god Jupiter. In the juxtaposition of these texts, I hope to shine a light on two extreme opinions about the universe itself: That we are utterly alone in this giant cosmic void, or that we are under the watchful eye of a deity or deities who demand our reverence. The opening text returns at the end of the piece in desperation to both declare the opinion and question the conviction of it. In the final bars of the piece there is a tonal shift in the audio track preceded by the solo harp proving that the universe does, in fact, transform even in the most mundane features such as background radiation. — Robbie LaBanca

Texts and Translations

Canciones para una cosa y otra by Carlos Alfonso Pérez

I. La luz de mi país es uno de mis atributos Hablo con azules Me entiendo con la espuma Sueño en tonos chillones y resucito cantando Digo soy porque lo sol (“sol” and “soy” are swapped for effect)	I. The light of my country is one of my attributes I speak with blue shades I get along with foam I dream in loud tones and I'm reborn singing I say sun because I'm so
II. Huele a nubes en el sol Llueve y no sé hasta qué lugar de adentro	II. It smells like clouds in the sun It rains and I don't know whither inside
III. Canta la luna en el recuerdo Huele a Dios cuando respiro	III. The moon sings in the memory It smells like God when I breathe

Espejo by Zulay Sanabria

Tú, infinita sustancia, progresión
libre de abismos, me hace ingresar
con veloz permanencia en espejos
que reflejan los muros del universo,
en destello de capas luminosas
de rocíos, que se abren hacia el desciframiento
de un horizonte que comunica los espacios
eternos de la existencia misma.

You, infinite substance, progression
free of abysses, it makes me enter
in mirrors with fast permanence
reflecting the walls of the universe,
in a flash of bright layers
of dew, which open to the decoding
of a horizon that connects the eternal spaces
of existence itself.

Neither Cruel Nor Kind by Samuel Menashe

The stars are
Although I do not sing
About them—
The sky and the trees
Are indifferent
To whom they please
The rose is unmoved

By my nose
And the garland in your hair
Although your eyes be lakes, dies
Why sigh for a star
Better bay at the moon
Better bay at the moon . . .
Oh moon, moon, moon

While the sun still spends his fabulous money by Kenneth Patchen

For the kingdoms in the eye of a fool,
Let us continue to waste our lives
Declaring beauty to the world
And let us continue to praise truth and justice
Through the eyes of the stars turn black
And the smoking juice of the universe,
Like the ruptured brain of God,
Pours down upon us in a final consecration

Evening Star by Edgar Allen Poe

'Twas noontide of summer,
And mid-time of night;
And stars, in their orbits,
Shone pale, thro' the light
Of the brighter, cold moon,
'Mid planets her slaves,
Herself in the Heavens,
Her beam on the waves.
I gazed awhile
On her cold smile;
Too cold - too cold for me -

There pass'd, as a shroud,
A fleecy cloud,
And I turned away to thee,
Proud Evening Star,
In thy glory afar,
And dearer thy beam shall be;
For joy to my heart
Is the proud part
Thou bearest in Heaven at night,
And more I admire
Thy distant fire,
Than that colder, lowly light.

Amata by Alexander Johnson

Though we are apart,
Love spans our divided hearts.
It will surround us
Until our two souls
May be whole once more.

Beyond

"It's been an adventure just getting out to Saturn, Saturn is such an alluring photographic target. It's a joy, really, to be able to take our images and composite them in an artful way, which is one of my cardinal working goals. It's about poetry and beauty and science all mixed together." — Carolyn Porco

"In a spiral galaxy, the ratio of dark-to-light matter is about a factor of ten. That's probably a good number for the ratio of our ignorance-to-knowledge. We're out of kindergarten, but only in about third grade." — Vera Rubin

"Don't be afraid to be curious. Don't be afraid to ask silly questions. Why is the sky blue? It turns out silly questions have profound and interesting answers. That at its heart is what science is all about. It's understanding nature and not being afraid to ask why." — Amy Mainzer

Let Everything Happen to You by Rainer Maria Rilke

Lass dir Alles geschehn:	Let everything happen to you:
Schönheit und Schrecken.	Beauty and Terror.
Man muss nur gehn:	Just Keep Going:
Kein Gefühl ist das fernste.	No feeling is final.
Gib mir die Hand.	Give me your hand.

Hymnus Iuppiter by Marcus Aurelius

“Universum transmutatio, vita est sententia”
“The Universe is transformation. Life is opinion.”

Orphic Hymn: To Jupiter

Iuppiter valde honorande, incorruptibilis, hoc tibi nos
Testimonium reddimus liberatorium et votum.
O rex, per tuum caput apparuere haec facile,
Terra dea mater montiumque altisona iuga
Et pontus et omnia, quaecunque coelum intus ordine continet.
Iuppiter saturnie, sceptritenens, descensor, magnanime,
Audi me!

Jupiter is very honored, incorruptible, that we have
We bear witness to the liberators of the vote.
O thou king, by means of this, it is easy to be seen by her head,
Mother Earth Goddess heights of the mountains Altisona
And bridges and all the things that heaven within order.
Jupiter Saturn, sceptered, descent, oh great,
Hear me!

Inversion Ensemble

Aaron Coronado	Katie Lewis
Adrienne Inglis	Keely J. Rhodes
Adrienne Pedrotti	Laura Mercado-Wright
Albert Garcia	Lena Hill
Alex Johnson	Leslie Pollack
Claudia Carroll*	Mary Elizabeth Ashton
Courtney Pierce*	Phil Pollack
Cristian Cantu*	Phillip Bernard
Daniel Robertson	Rebecca Stidolph
Diana Hopkins	Robbie LaBanca
Doug Rensi	Scotty Castro
Duane Roth	Stephanie K. Andrews
Jennifer Inglis Hudson	Steve Sifner
Jennifer Tullis	Steven Brennfleck
Jennifer Wang	Tim O'Brien*
Jennifer Whitwell	Trevor Shaw

Special Guests

Ben Hummel, Violin	Alexis Buffum, Violin
Martha Carapetyan, Viola	Eunhie Lim, Cello
Jessica Gilliam-Valls, Double Bass	Shana Norton, Harp

* *Soloist*

Special Thanks

St. John's United Methodist Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church
First United Methodist Church of Pflugerville

Claire Breihan
Jennifer Inglis Hudson
Ben Hummel
Adrienne Inglis
Bonnie Lockhart
Carolyn Long
Adrienne Pedrotti
Phil and Leslie Pollack
O. R. Schmidt
Rebecca Stidholph
Kim Vitray



From the Artistic Director -

I'm delighted that you're here with us. Your presence at this, the third public concert of Inversion Ensemble's inaugural season, sends an important message to the Central Texas community that you not only support the arts, but that you also support innovations in modern music. Inversion Ensemble is more than simply a choir. It is a collaborative effort of composers, singers, and conductors who work together to create new, exciting sounds which appeal equally to the heart and mind. Being a classical music lover is not a prerequisite for enjoying an Inversion Ensemble program in its fullness. However, an open mind certainly helps!

We live in a turbulent society. Technology, culture, and language are changing faster than many of us can comprehend. The world can often seem equally loving and cruel. With "The Universal Chamber", we'll take an hour or so to pause and take stock of our place in a vast, astounding cosmos. It is my hope that we will not see ourselves or our accomplishments as trivial, but that we'll realize the insignificance of our differences as we reach beyond the planet on which we live. Join me on a journey that begins by noticing the immediate beauty of the environment which surrounds us on earth, guides us beyond the atmosphere, and allows us to drift into the unimaginable sea of planets, stars, and, indeed, dark matter upon which our "Pale Blue Dot" floats. You are in for something special!

Trevor F. Shaw
Artistic Director
Inversion Ensemble

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