

Santa Fe CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

51ST SEASON

Wednesday
12 p.m.
JULY 17

St. Francis Auditorium in the
New Mexico Museum of Art

Due to unforeseen circumstances, mezzo-soprano **Kelley O'Connor** is unable to perform at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival this summer. We look forward to welcoming her back to the Festival in a future season. We're grateful to baritone **Will Liverman** and pianist **Myra Huang**, who are making their Festival debuts at today's recital with the following program:

WILL LIVERMAN, *Baritone*

MYRA HUANG, *Piano*

MICHAEL IPPOLITO
(b. 1985)

The Long Year (2021)

Winter Night
Spring Song
The Faun
Mariposa
If Still Your Orchards Bear
The Oak Leaves
The Buck in the Snow

WILLIAM GRANT STILL
(1895–1978)

"Grief" (1953)

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS
(1872–1958)

Songs of Travel (1901–04)

The Vagabond
Let Beauty Awake
The Roadside Fire
Youth and Love
In Dreams
The Infinite Shining Heavens
Whither Must I Wander?
Bright Is the Ring of Words

FRANCIS POULENC
(1899–1963)

"Avant le cinéma" from *Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire* (1931)

CARL LOEWE
(1796–1869)

"Erlkönig," Op. 1, No. 3 (1818)

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873–1943)

"Sud'ba," Op. 21, No. 1 (1902)

*The Music at Noon Wednesday Series honors the memory of Ronald Goldberg, MD.
The Santa Fe Opera is a proud promotional partner of the Festival's Piano-Vocal Series.*





ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Grammy Award–winning baritone **Will Liverman** is the recipient of The Metropolitan Opera’s 2022 Beverly Sills Artist Award, and he’s the co-creator of the opera *The Factotum*, which received its world premiere at Lyric Opera of Chicago in February 2023. Highlights of his 2023–24 season include returning to The Metropolitan Opera as the title role in Anthony Davis’s *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* and Mercutio in Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette* as well as performing the role of Dr. Josiah Blackwell in the world premiere production of Rene Orth’s *10 Days in a Madhouse* at Opera Philadelphia. Additional engagements include the Cincinnati and Houston symphony

orchestras, the Lexington Philharmonic, Dayton Opera, Caramoor, and Tanglewood, among others. Liverman also serves as the artistic advisor for Renée Fleming’s SongStudio program for young vocalists and collaborative pianists at Carnegie Hall. An alumnus of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago and a Glimmerglass Festival Young Artist, Liverman also holds degrees from The Juilliard School (M.M.) and Wheaton College (B.M.). His 2021 album *Dreams of a New Day: Songs by Black Composers* was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

For information about pianist **Myra Huang**, please see p. 81 of the Festival’s 2024 Program Book.

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM by Eric Bromberger

MICHAEL IPPOLITO (b. 1985)

The Long Year (2021)

Michael Ippolito was born in Tampa, Florida, and studied composition at the University of Cincinnati College–Conservatory of Music and Juilliard. He’s currently an associate professor of composition at Texas State University. Ippolito has written for orchestra, chamber ensembles, keyboard, and voice, and his music has been performed by the symphony orchestras of Chicago, Dallas, Milwaukee, and San Diego; the Attacca and Miró quartets; and many other ensembles. His numerous honors include awards from ASCAP and the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Ippolito wrote *The Long Year* for today’s performers, baritone Will Liverman and pianist Myra Huang—who premiered the work on February 1, 2022, at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC—and he wrote the following program note for the piece:

The Long Year is a set of seven songs to poetry by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950). On the surface, this set is simply a collection of seasonal nature poems, arranged according to a calendar year (starting with winter,

moving through spring, summer and fall, and ending with winter). But beneath the surface, something seems to be wrong with the state of nature in these poems, or humanity’s relationship to the natural world. While Millay wrote these words in the first part of the twentieth century, I couldn’t help reading our current climate collapse into these texts. Through that lens, these songs express my own longing for a return to a right relationship with the landscape, and other living beings, and with the weather and the progression of the seasons, but also my awareness that this relationship is irretrievably lost. *The Long Year* resides in this state of longing for something you know is gone forever.

WILLIAM GRANT STILL (1895–1978)

“Grief” (1953)

William Grant Still was born in Mississippi and grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas. Both of his parents were teachers, but his father died when Still was only three months old. His stepfather encouraged his interest in music, and Still studied and taught himself various instruments growing

up. After graduating as valedictorian of his high school, Still attended Wilberforce University but left before graduating. He studied composition at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the New England Conservatory and also privately with Edgard Varèse, who was a great influence on, and champion of, Still's work.

After service in the navy during World War I, Still moved to New York, where he worked with W. C. Handy, Paul Whiteman, and Artie Shaw. In 1930, he moved to Los Angeles, where he lived for the rest of his life. He worked as an arranger of film scores before eventually devoting himself entirely to composition and conducting.

Still was a trailblazer in many ways. He was the first African American to have a symphony performed by a major American orchestra (the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra), conduct a major orchestra (the Los Angeles Philharmonic), and have an opera produced by a major company (New York City Opera). He wrote "Grief" in 1953. His friend LeRoy V. Brant had visited a cemetery and encountered a statue of a weeping angel that had its head wrapped in its arms. Brant sketched a brief poem inspired by that moment and sent it to Still, who set it to music. Beginning quietly, almost as a recitative, the song gathers force and soars to an impassioned climax before falling away to a quiet close.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872–1958)

Songs of Travel (1901–04)

Vaughan Williams's *Songs of Travel* features settings of short poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, but it isn't a cycle that offers a kind of progression across its span; rather, it's one that's unified by the journey of the speaker in the poems: a young man walking across the countryside.

Such a situation calls to mind two great song cycles—Schubert's *Winterreise* and Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer*—but the traveler in Vaughan Williams's songs feels none of the agony expressed in those cycles, with their recurrent themes of pain, loneliness, and alienation. The road may indeed be a lonely place, but Vaughan Williams's songs are, for the most part, suffused

with a welcomed solitude and the enthusiasm of a young man discovering the world.

"The Vagabond" introduces the traveler. Beneath his melodic line, the piano's steady tread echoes the sound of his steps. In "Let Beauty Awake," the vocal line soars above a rippling accompaniment, while "The Roadside Fire" first offers a bustling catalog of pleasures and then expands in the final stanza to recount private memories. "Youth and Love" is a song of departure, but it has none of the pain of leave-taking—only the happy, casual wave of the youth passing along the road and his flood of emotions beneath the starry skies.

One of the treasures of this set is "Whither Must I Wander?," in which the vigor and beauty of Vaughan Williams's vocal line is fused with the wistful remembrances of Stevenson's text. "Bright Is the Ring of Words" begins heroically but then grows pensive and reflects on the power of art and its maker.

FRANCIS POULENC (1899–1963)

"Avant le cinéma" from Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire (1931)

The poet, playwright, and critic Guillaume Apollinaire was born in Rome in 1880, moved to Paris in his teens, and became a naturalized Frenchman. He served in the French army during World War I and suffered a shrapnel wound to the head. While recovering from that wound, he contracted the flu and died, in November 1918, during the Spanish flu epidemic.

Apollinaire's poetry takes us into a strange urban setting where reality and fantasy exist in equal parts. (It was Apollinaire who coined the term "surrealism.") Poulenc loved the poetry of Apollinaire (whom he'd met briefly while still a very young man) and set it to music throughout his entire life. In addition to his approximately 40 settings of Apollinaire's poems, Poulenc based his 1947 opera *Les Mamelles de Tirésias* on Apollinaire's play of the same name.

In 1931, Poulenc composed his *Quatre poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire*, a setting of four brief poems. The third of these, "Avant le cinéma," is a lighthearted reflection on art and language.

Dancing agilely along its 12/8 meter, the song whips past in less than a minute.

CARL LOEWE (1796–1869)

“Erlkönig,” Op. 1, No. 3 (1818)

The German-born composer Carl Loewe wrote more than 500 songs and ballads, often based on folktales and magic, and he helped promote their fame by singing them throughout Europe on his frequent concert tours (he had a rich baritone voice).

Loewe began singing as a choirboy. His talent was recognized early, and he had a very thorough musical training, including university study. He made his career as a music director in the city of Stettin (now in Poland). His reputation during his lifetime rivaled Schubert’s, and on a trip to Vienna, Loewe learned, to his pleasure, that the Viennese referred to him as “the north German Schubert.”

One of the legends that haunted medieval German folklore was the terrifying tale of the Erlking (“king of the elves”), who lived in the Black Forest and lured people to their destruction. Goethe’s famous poem “Erlkönig” had one of its most famous settings by Schubert, but Loewe’s is impressive in its own right. Loewe didn’t know Schubert’s setting when he wrote this song in 1818, as Schubert’s wasn’t published until 1821, but both are dramatic, feature an active piano part, and differentiate the three voices in Goethe’s poem. It’s instructive to hear two young composers (Schubert was 18 when he made his setting and Loewe was 22) approach this text in different ways.

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF (1873–1943)

“Sud’ba,” Op. 21, No. 1 (1902)

We instinctively think of Rachmaninoff as a composer of piano music and opulent works for orchestra, and too few of us know his many works for voice. Rachmaninoff had a considerable melodic gift, and his vocal output included some of his finest music: the all-night vigil *Vespers*, the choral symphony *The Bells*, and about 80 songs.

Rachmaninoff composed his Twelve Songs, Op. 21, in the spring of 1902. That was a good

moment in the composer’s life: After a long and debilitating depression, he’d found his way back to creativity and had just savored the public success of his Second Piano Concerto and Cello Sonata. In April of 1902, as he was completing these songs, Rachmaninoff married Natalia Satina. Not surprisingly, many of the songs are love songs—although the first of the 12, “Sud’ba” (“Fate”), is not: It’s a dark and powerful song that features text by Aleksey Apukhtin (1840–93), and, according to Rachmaninoff’s own note in the score, it had been “suggested by Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony.”

Of the famous first four notes of that symphony, Beethoven once said: “Thus Fate knocks at the door,” and those notes resound ominously throughout Rachmaninoff’s song. It doesn’t matter whether one is rich or poor, Fate is always out there, waiting with its deadly “tap, tap, tap, tap” on the door, and this song marches firmly to its grim conclusion. Rachmaninoff dedicated this song to the great Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin.

ERIC BROMBERGER earned his doctorate in American literature at UCLA and for 10 years taught literature and writing courses at Bates College and San Diego State University. Then he quit teaching to devote himself to his first love, music. Bromberger, a violinist, writes program notes for the San Diego Symphony, the La Jolla Music Society, San Francisco Performances, the University of Chicago Presents, Washington Performing Arts at The Kennedy Center, and many other organizations. He was a pre-concert lecturer for the Los Angeles Philharmonic for more than 20 seasons.

JENNIFER RHODES (supertitle translations) holds a PhD in Italian and comparative literature. Her research focuses on sites of interchange between literature, music, and the visual arts. Her current book project explores the influence of Richard Wagner on the modern novel. Rhodes teaches literature at Columbia University and has been a member of the Santa Fe Opera Titles Department since 2000.