

Temple University Concert Choir

Paul Rardin, conductor

Kim Barroso, pianist

Vinroy D. Brown, Jr., graduate conductor

All of Us: Excerpts from *Considering Matthew Shepard*

Sunday, December 10, 2023 • 3:00PM

Chapel of Four Chaplains, Temple Performing Arts Center

1837 N. Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

Draw the Circle Wide

Mark Miller

Victoria Smith and Julian Nguyen, soloists
Daniel Virgen, bass; Alonzo Davis, drums; Kim Barroso, piano
Vinroy D. Brown, Jr., conductor

From *Considering Matthew Shepard*

Craig Hella Johnson

PROLOGUE

(b. 1962)

1. Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass

Macey Roberts, tenor

3. We Tell Each Other Stories/I Am Open

Roslyn Rich, soprano

PASSION

7. The Fence (that night)

Chase Côté, baritone

10. Keep It Away From Me

Isabella DiPasquale, mezzo soprano
Angela Bui, Ali Crosley, and Macey Roberts, trio

23. In Need of Breath

Roberto Guevara, tenor

EPILOGUE

32. All of Us

Nalani Matthias, Jiaye Xu, and Tatiyanna Hayward, trio

Kim Barroso, piano; Sarah Eom, clarinet
Michael Raymond, guitar; Livi Keenan, percussion
Zhanara Makhmutova, violin; Shannon Merlino, viola
Leigh Brown, cello; Daniel Virgen, double bass

Please join Concert Choir for a performance of the complete oratorio

Considering Matthew Shepard:

Tuesday, April 16, 2024, 7:30pm, TPAC

The Department of Vocal Arts gratefully acknowledges the support of the Elaine Brown Choral Chair Fund, which supports excellence, diversity, and community in choral activities at Temple University.

The use of photographic, audio, and video recording is not permitted.

Please turn off all electronic devices.

One hundred forty-fourth performance of the 2023-2024 season.

Miller *Draw the Circle Wide*

Mark Miller teaches sacred music at Drew University and Yale University, and is minister of music of Christ Church in Summit, New Jersey. He is a prolific composer with choral works published by Choristers Guild, Hal Leonard, Hinshaw, Santa Barbara, and Abingdon Press. An advocate for social justice, Miller produced a 2014 songbook “Roll Down Justice! Sacred Songs & Social Justice” that was published by Choristers Guild.

Draw the Circle Wide is an anthem in the gospel style. Set to a text by Gordon Light, the piece embraces inclusion and togetherness, such that “no one stands alone.” A solo verse gently introduces the upward, hopeful melody before giving way to a choral response whose syncopation increases the musical energy. A second verse features soloist with choral backgrounds before building to a higher, stronger version of the earlier response; this “chorus” builds in power, and today’s performance invites our soloists to improvise in the gospel style.

Notes by Paul Rardin

Draw the circle wide
Draw the circle wide
No one stands alone, we'll stand side by side
Draw the circle wide

Draw the circle wide
Draw it wider still
Let this be our song; no one stands alone
Standing side by side
Draw the circle wide

Johnson *Considering Matthew Shepard*

Notes from the Conspirare website

In October of 1998, Matthew Shepard, a young, gay student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie was kidnapped, severely beaten, tied to a fence and left to die in a lonely field under a blanket of stars. Five days later, when Matt passed away, the world was watching. Approaching the eve of the 20th anniversary, Craig Hella Johnson has responded with his first concert-length work, *Considering Matthew Shepard*.

Led from the piano by Johnson, *Considering Matthew Shepard* showcases the award-winning artistry of Conspirare's singers with a chamber ensemble of renowned instrumentalists. This three-part fusion oratorio speaks with a fresh and bold voice, incorporating a variety of musical styles seamlessly woven into a unified whole. Johnson sets a wide range of poetic and soulful texts by poets including Hildegard of Bingen, Lesléa Newman, Michael Dennis Browne, and Rumi. Passages from Matt's personal journal, interviews and writings from his parents Judy and Dennis Shepard, newspaper reports and additional texts by Johnson and Browne are poignantly appointed throughout the work.

Considering Matthew Shepard debuted at #4 on Billboard's Traditional Classical Chart after Harmonia Mundi released the 2-CD Set recording in mid-September, 2016. Audiences describe this work as "brilliant," "powerful," "innovative," "dazzling," and "gripping." *The Bay Area Reporter* wrote "it has the richness, depth and complexity to compel repeated hearing, and the power to get you the first time out," and from the *The Washington Post*: "Considering Matthew Shepard" demonstrates music's capacity to encompass, transform and transcend tragedy. Powerfully cathartic, it leads us from horror and grief to a higher understanding of the human condition, enabling us to endure."

Considering Matthew Shepard joins the ranks of many significant artistic responses to Matthew Shepard's legacy. Most noteworthy is *The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman and the Members of the Tectonic Theater Project, which has been seen by more than 30 million people. Jason Marsden, Executive Director of the Matthew Shepard Foundation calls *Considering Matthew Shepard* "by far the most intricate, beautiful and unyielding artistic response to this notorious anti-gay hate crime."

Matthew Shepard's story must never be forgotten.

Notes from the Conductor

October 2023 marked the 25th anniversary of the murder of Matthew Shepard. American composer Craig Hella Johnson's oratorio *Considering Matthew Shepard* invites us to grapple with several seemingly contradictory impulses: to acknowledge the brutality of his murder while also finding compassion for his killers; to hear deeply hurtful hate speech while also bonding to each other through love; to recognize that the figure we may see as an iconic martyr was in fact an "ordinary boy"; and to tell the story of a single human being using a multiplicity of musical styles and influences. As stated in a review from the Chicago Tribune:

"That composer Johnson has managed to draw this message from such a heinous act stands as a testament not only to his vision but to his craft as composer. It would have been very easy for this work to have devolved into treacle or pastiche ~ or both. Instead, Johnson has penned a straightforward, sublimely melodic, utterly unpretentious score, its music as all-embracing as its text."

Today's performance features selections from each of the three sections - Prologue, Passion, Epilogue - and focuses on movements involving prominent soli. It captures the remarkable diversity of Johnson's interest in many American popular genres, including blues and gospel, all presented in a highly accessible but sophisticated choral tapestry. The selected movements present a choral frame of optimism and celebration of life ("Cattle, Horses, Sky, and Grass" and "All of Us"), with a slower, lyrical medley of numbers whose emotions include nostalgia ("We Tell Each Other Stories/I Am Open"), grief ("The Fence (before)"), denial ("Keep It Away From Me"), and longing ("In Need of Breath").

The program also encompasses texts from a wide variety of sources, most powerful of which is Leslea Newman's excerpts from her book of poems *October Mourning*; please see below for the story of Newman's remarkable connection to Matthew Shepard.

We encourage you to join us again on April 16 for a performance of the entire oratorio, complete with the musical narrations that weave a more complete picture of Matthew, his life, his death, and our reflections on how we carry on his name.

Notes from Poet Lesléa Newman

“Introduction” from OCTOBER MOURNING: A SONG FOR MATTHEW SHEPARD

On Tuesday, October 6, 1998, at approximately 11:45 p.m., twenty-one-year-old Matthew Shepard, a gay college student attending the University of Wyoming, was kidnapped from a bar by twenty-one-year old Aaron McKinney and twenty-one-year-old Russell Henderson. Pretending to be gay, the two men lured Matthew Shepard into their truck, drove him to the outskirts of Laramie, robbed him, beat him with a pistol, tied him to a buck-rail fence, and left him to die. The next day, at about 6:00 p.m. - eighteen hours after the attack - he was discovered and taken to a hospital. He never regained consciousness and died five days later, on Monday, October 12, with his family by his side.

One of the last things Matthew Shepard did that Tuesday night was attend a meeting of the University of Wyoming's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Association. The group was putting final touches on plans for Gay Awareness Week, scheduled to begin the following Sunday, October 11, coinciding with a National Coming Out Day. Planned campus activities included a film showing, an open poetry reading, and a keynote speaker.

That keynote speaker was me.

I never forgot what happened in Laramie, and around the tenth anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death, I found myself thinking more and more about him. And so I began writing a series of poems, striving to create a work of art that explores the events surrounding Matthew Shepard's murder in order to gain a better understanding of their impact on myself and the world.

What really happened at the fence that night? Only three people know the answer to that question. Two of them are imprisoned, convicted murderers whose stories often contradict each other (for example, in separate interviews both McKinney and Henderson have claimed that he alone tied Matthew Shepard to the fence). The other person who knows what really happened that night is dead. We will never know his side of the story.

This book is my side of the story.

While the poems in this book are inspired by actual events, they do not in any way represent the statements, thoughts, feelings, opinions, or attitudes of any actual person. The statements, thoughts, feelings, opinions, and attitudes conveyed belong to me. All monologues contained within the poems are figments of my imagination; no actual person spoke any of the words contained within the body of any poem. Those words are mine and mine alone. When the words of an actual person are used as a short epigraph for a poem, the source of that quote is cited at the back of the book in a section entitled “Notes,” which contains citations and suggestions for further reading about the crime. The poems, which are meant to be read in

sequential order as one whole work, are a work of poetic invention and imagination: a historical novel in verse. The poems are not an objective reporting of Matthew Shepard's murder and its aftermath; rather they are my own personal interpretation of them.

There is a bench on the campus of the University of Wyoming dedicated to Matthew Shepard, inscribed with the words *He continues to make a difference*. My hope is that readers of *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard* will be inspired to make a difference and honor his legacy by erasing hate and replacing it with compassion, understanding, and love.

Acknowledgments

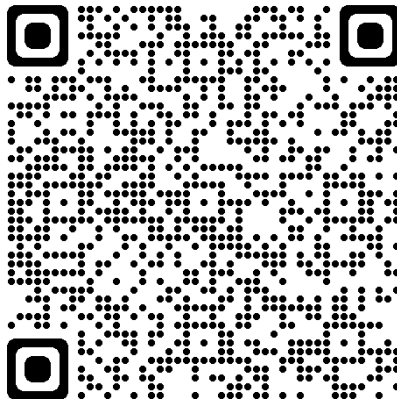
Concert Choir wishes to thank the singers, faculty, staff, and friends who have supported their musical and human growth as part of the rehearsal process. We thank them for helping us in this important and powerful journey.

Corey Price
Noah Slade-Joseph
The Matthew Shepard Foundation
Felipe Fuentes
Dennis Shepard
Brandon McShaffrey

Thanks also to our colleagues and students who assisted with instrumentalists and instruments:

Aisha Dossumova
Phillip O'Banion
Adam Rudisill
Eric Schweingruber

Libretto



Temple University Concert Choir

Paul Rardin, conductor

Kim Barroso, pianist

Vinroy D. Brown, Jr., graduate teaching assistant

SOPRANO

Angela Bui
Jessica Corrigan
Kayla Elliott
Jessica Gambino
Emma Krewson *
Emily Loughery
Victoria Lumia
Nalani Matthias
Roslyn Rich
Victoria Smith
Marlena St. Jean
Jiaye Xu

ALTO

Elizabeth Beavers
Alison Crosley *
Isabella DiPasquale
Carmelina Favacchia
Kaitlyn Gaughan
Tatiyanna Hayward
Macey Roberts
Sadie Roser
Sydney Spector

TENOR

Shawn Anderson
Ben Bian
Roberto Guevara
James Hatter
Connor Husa
Blake Levinson
Grant Nalty
Julian Nguyen
Corey Price
Brandon Scribner
Reid Shriver *

BASS

Vinroy D. Brown, Jr.
Benjamin Chen
Chase Côté
Alexander Nguyễn
Roy Nussbaum *
Gabriel Planas-Borgstrom
Joshua Powell
Anthony Serrano
Kylar Sprenger
Andrew Stern

*section leader

Boyer College of Music and Dance

Temple University Choirs

Concert Choir

Graduate Conductors Chorus

Recital Chorus

Singing Owls

University Chorale

University Singers

University Voices

Department of Vocal Arts

Choral Activities Area

Kendra Balmer, Adjunct Professor, Conducting

Dustin Cates, Assistant Professor, Choral Music Education

Leslie Cochran, Coordinator, Department of Vocal Arts

Rollo Dilworth, Professor, Choral Music Education

Mitos Andaya Hart, Associate Director, Choral Activities

Paul Rardin, Chair, Department of Vocal Arts; Elaine Brown Chair of Choral Music

Kathleen Shannon, Adjunct Instructor

Julia Zavadsky, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Conducting

Jeffrey Cornelius, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Alan Harler, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Janet Yamron, Professor Emeritus, Music and Music Education

The Temple University Choirs have enjoyed a rich tradition of excellence under the batons of some of Philadelphia's most prominent conductors. The seven ensembles comprise nearly 200 students each year, and have enjoyed regional and national acclaim for their performances both individually and collectively. Between the 1940s and 1980s the combined choirs performed annually with The Philadelphia Orchestra, and since 2002 have collaborated annually with the Temple University Symphony Orchestra at the Kimmel Cultural Campus.

Temple Choirs strive for excellence, artistry, and individual growth. They embrace both standard choral works and contemporary music from all around the world. In 1967, under the preparation of Robert Page and the baton of Eugene Ormandy, the choirs performed Carl Orff's *Catulli Carmina* with The Philadelphia Orchestra, a performance that tied with Leonard Bernstein's Mahler's Symphony No. 8 for that year's Grammy Award for Best Classical Choral Performance (Other Than Opera).

Auditions for Temple Choirs

All choirs are open to Temple students of all majors by audition. For audition information, contact Leslie Cochran at leslie.cochran@temple.edu.

Boyer College of Music and Dance

The Boyer College of Music and Dance offers over 500 events open to the public each year. Students have the unique opportunity to interact with leading performers, composers, conductors, educators, choreographers and guest artists while experiencing a challenging and diverse academic curriculum. The Boyer faculty are recognized globally as leaders in their respective fields. Boyer alumni are ambassadors of artistic leadership and perform with major orchestras, opera and dance companies, teach at schools and colleges and work as professional music therapists, choreographers and composers. Boyer's recording label, BCM&D Records, has produced more than forty recordings, five of which have received Grammy nominations.

boyer.temple.edu

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts

The Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts consists of the Boyer College of Music and Dance, School of Theater, Film and Media Arts, the George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater and the Temple Performing Arts Center. The School of Theater, Film and Media Arts engages gifted students with nationally and internationally recognized faculty scholars and professionals. A hallmark of the School of Theater, Film and Media Arts is the Los Angeles Study Away program, housed at historic Raleigh Studios. The George and Joy Abbott Center for Musical Theater engages visiting performers, guest artists, set designers, playwrights and other Broadway professionals. The Temple Performing Arts Center (TPAC), a historic landmark on campus, is home to a state-of-the-art 1,200 seat auditorium and 200 seat chapel. More than 500 concerts, classes, lectures and performances take place at TPAC each year.

arts.temple.edu

Temple University

Temple University's history begins in 1884, when a young working man asked Russell Conwell if he could tutor him at night. It wasn't long before he was teaching several dozen students—working people who could only attend class at night but had a strong desire to make something of themselves. Conwell recruited volunteer faculty to participate in the burgeoning night school, and in 1888 he received a charter of incorporation for “The Temple College.” His founding vision for the school was to provide superior educational opportunities for academically talented and highly motivated students, regardless of their backgrounds or means. The fledgling college continued to grow, adding programs and students throughout the following decades. Today, Temple's more than 35,000 students continue to follow the university's official motto—*Perseverantia Vincit*, or “Perseverance Conquers”—with their supreme dedication to excellence in academics, research, athletics, the arts and more.

temple.edu

Temple University 2023-2024 Season Upcoming Events

Monday, December 11 at 5:00 PM

Latin American Ensemble
Arronson Hall

Monday, December 11 at 6:00 PM

Opera Workshop: Graduate Arias
3rd Floor, Mitten Hall

Monday, December 11 at 7:30 PM

Opera Workshop: Undergraduate Arias
3rd Floor, Mitten Hall

Monday, December 11 at 7:30 PM

Temple University Night Owls
Temple Performing Arts Center

Monday, December 11 at 7:30 PM

Temple University New Music Ensemble
Rock Hall Auditorium

Thursday, December 14 at 1:00 PM

BS Music Technology Capstone Presentations
Presser Hall Room 142

Thursday, December 14 at 7:30 PM

OWLchestra Campus String Orchestra
Temple Performing Arts Center

Friday, December 15 at 7:30 PM

CGYM Chamber Music Recital
Rock Hall Auditorium

Saturday, December 16 at 4:00 PM

Temple Music Prep: CGYM Winter Concert
Temple Performing Arts Center

Friday, January 12 at 7:00 PM

Temple Music Prep Studio Recital: Cello Students of Rachel Freivogel
Rock Hall Auditorium

All events are free unless otherwise noted. Programs are subject to change without notice.
For further information or to confirm events, please call 215.204.7609
or visit boyer.temple.edu