

Temple University Concert Choir

Paul Rardin, conductor

Kim Barroso, pianist

Lily Carmichael, graduate conductor

with a poet's eye...

Sunday, October 16, 2022 • 3:00 PM

Lew Klein Hall, Temple Performing Arts Center

1837 N. Broad Street

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Program

with a poet's eye...

Cliff Notes

Carol Barnett
(b. 1949)

Lily Carmichael, conductor

The Uncertainty of the Poet

Cary John Franklin
(b. 1956)

StarSongs

Nocturn

A Clear Midnight

Peace on Earth

Haiku

Nocturn

Jan Krzywicki
(b. 1948)

Hirona Oka, violin
Helen Gerhold, harp
Chloe Lucente, soprano

The Caged Bird Sings for Freedom

Joel Thompson
(b. 1988)

Mary Bond, alto
Anthony Bithell, clarinet

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.

Thirtieth performance of the 2022-2023 season.

Notes on the Program

Cliff Notes

Carol Barnett

Carol Barnett is a widely respected, frequently performed composer of choral music. She has especially embraced music of authentic American sources, including spirituals, and shape-note tunes, and bluegrass music. Her cantata *The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass* was a remarkable crossover success, beautifully intertwining classical and bluegrass idioms. As composer in residence for the Dale Warland Singers from 1991 to 2001, she enjoyed regular premieres by one of the most respected professional choirs in the country.

Cliff Notes sets a humorous poem in like fashion. Similar to her clever *Farewell Overture*, *Cliff Notes* is a collection of textual fragments, in this case pieces of advice to a first-year college student, woven together musically by chatty musical phrases and linked by a rhythmically driven piano part. Of the hypothetical mother that serves as the poem's subject, poet Margaret Walker writes:

Loosely modeled on Polonius's advice to his son Laertes ("to thine own self be true") in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Mother's tone is varied – motivational, practical, gently exasperated, regretfully knowing that it's time for them to ignore her expectations and form their own.

Cliff Notes from Your Mother as You Leave Home

If it starts to spark, remove it.
The bigger mistake is not asking.
Don't wait too long to get started.
Drop every expectation that does not belong to you.
Always poke it first to see if it moves.
Sometimes the only method is inexperience.
Above all, be kind. No – be true to yourself. Also, kind.
If you're going to nap on the sofa, for heaven's sake tuck your
glasses underneath it so you won't step on them when you get up.
Figure out for what you would walk through fire.
Walk through fire.

Poem by Margaret Walker

The Uncertainty of the Poet

Cary John Franklin

Like Carol Barnett, Cary John Franklin is an American composer based in Minnesota whose work has been championed by top American choirs, including The Dale Warland Singers and VocalEssence. Franklin has also received commissions from the Kansas City Symphony, Chanticleer, and Washington National Opera. His brief and

humorous *The Uncertainty of the Poet* has enjoyed contemporary renown thanks to jazz singer Kurt Elling's 2015 recording, which has generated over 13,000 views on YouTube.

English Poet Wendy Cope based her poem *The Uncertainty of the Poet* on a 1913 painting by Giorgio di Chirico, an Italian artist who helped establish the 20th century absurdism movement in painting. The foreground of the painting features the torso of a classical statue surrounded by a large bunch of bananas. Cope's fragmented poem captures this sense of apparent whimsy, spinning 15 poetic lines from a mere eight words, mixing and matching them from beginning to end, and morphing gradually from an assertive statement ("I am a poet") to a hesitant question ("Am I a poet?"). Picking up on this sense of whimsy, Franklin's music begins haltingly before settling into two separate grooves – a tenor/bass vamp in the unusual 5/8 time below an highly angular soprano/alto tune. The unresolved final chord emphasizes the poet's uncertainty as to her actual profession.

I am a poet.
I am very fond of bananas.
I am bananas.
I am very fond of a poet.
I am very fond.
A fond poet of 'I am, I am' -
Very bananas.
Fond of 'Am I bananas?
Am I?' - a very poet.
Bananas of a poet!
Am I fond? Am I very?
Poet bananas! I am.
I am fond of a 'very.'
I am of very fond bananas.
Am I a poet?

StarSongs

Jan Krzywicki

Jan Krzywicki is Professor of Music Studies at Temple University, where he teaches theory and composition and serves as conductor of the New Music Ensemble. He is also conductor of the contemporary ensemble Network for New Music, a post he has held since 1990. As a composer he excels in numerous genres, having received commissions from organizations such as Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Colorado Quartet, and Portland Symphony Orchestra. His recordings with Albany Recordings include *Catching Light* from 2018, featuring the Temple University Concert Choir performing *Two Elegies*. The ensemble is proud to be featured on the forthcoming BCM&D recording of *StarSongs*, recorded earlier this year.

Krzywicki summarizes this five-movement work:

StarSongs is a meditation on night and stars, in the form of five choral songs. The first song, which sets the initial stanza of a poem by Kathleen Raine as a kind of prelude, depicts the fall of night and the emergence of stars. The second song contemplates night's spirituality, while the third, a kind of scherzo, portrays the activity of the heavenly constellations at night. The fourth, a vocalise, offers an interpretation of the text without employing the words themselves. The final song completes the text of the initial poem, a consideration of man's irrepressible need to dream.

Krzywicki achieves a musical texture that is always evocative, often in slow tempi and quiet dynamics. Choral humming, violin harmonics (ghostly-sounding high pitches), and harp *bisbigliando* ("murmuring") passages are found in all movements except the third. In this piece Krzywicki favors melodies involving whole tones (think the sound of the celeste evoking a dream sequence); harmonies built on perfect fourths (often creating chords we associate with jazz); and a fluid mixing of rhythmic textures between homophonic (all voices singing at the same time) and polyphonic (all voices singing at different times). Dissonant harmonies lead to surprising, climactic triads ~ musical meteor showers of sorts, putting on a display after more subdued, twinkling stars. The third movement performs the same function as a scherzo in a classical symphony; a fast, playful palate-cleanser following slower, more contemplative music. The piece concludes quietly, with harp and chorus settling into a welcoming D major while the violin, in its upper register, gently questions this harmony with a dissonant F natural, as if inviting us to stargaze again tomorrow night to learn how it all ends.

I. Nocturn

Night comes, an angel stands Measuring out the time of stars,
Still are the winds, and still the hours...

Poem by Kathleen Raine

II. A Clear Midnight

This is thy hour, O Soul.
Thy free flight into the wordless,
Away from books, away from art,
The day erased, the lesson done,
Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, Pondering the themes thou lovest
best: Night, sleep, death, and stars.

Poem by Walt Whitman

III. Peace on Earth

The Archer is wake!
The Swan is flying!
Gold against blue
An Arrow is lying.
There is hunting in heaven-
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Bears are abroad! The Eagle is screaming! Gold against blue
Their eyes are gleaming!
Sleep!
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

The Sisters lie
With their arms intertwining; Gold against blue
Their hair is shining!
The Serpent writhes!
Orion is listening!
His sword is glistening!
Sleep!
There is hunting in heaven-
Sleep safe till tomorrow.

Poem by William Carlos Williams

IV. Haiku

how bright the sound
 of one star humming
 among the many

Poem by Geraldine Clinton Little

V. Nocturn

... It would be peace to lie
Still in the still hours at the angel's feet,
Upon a star hung in a starry sky,
But hearts another measure beat.

Each body, wingless as it lies,
Sends out its butterfly of night
With delicate wings and jewelled eyes.

And some upon day's shores are cast,
And some in darkness lost
In waves beyond the world, where float
Somewhere the islands of the blest.

Poem by Kathleen Raine

The Caged Bird Sings for Freedom

Joel Thompson

American composer Joel Thompson is enjoying growing renown as a composer of choral music as he approaches his 35th birthday. Thompson's breakout piece, *The Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, has enjoyed widespread success, and won an Emmy award for a 2017 documentary about the piece. Since then, he was appointed Houston Grand Opera's first-ever full-time Composer in Residence after composing his first opera, *The Snowy Day*, for that company. He has also received commissions from LA Opera, LA Master Chorale, and Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. He sings bass in *Exigence*, a professional chorus highlighting artistry within the Black and LatinX communities, for whom Thompson composed *The Caged Bird Sings for Freedom*.

Of this 2016 piece, which sets Maya Angelou's poem *Caged Bird*, Thompson writes:

The first refrain of the piece is not sung but played by the clarinet in order to establish the instrumental as the titular character. The music accompanying the second verse about the free bird ("thinks of another breeze...") effectively transforms from adventurous to menacing to highlight Angelou's subtle hints at imperialism and economic conquest ("trade winds soft", "claims the sky his own"). During the subsequent verse, the clarinet – as avatar of the caged bird – wails and slowly dies while trilling and eventually settles on a B, which is seamlessly transferred to a wordless chorus. A soloist sings the caged bird refrain for the first time, resurrecting the fallen clarinet. The intent is to have the chorus now represent the caged bird, keeping its spirit alive, singing for freedom.

Notes by Paul Rardin

Caged Bird

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Poem by Maya Angelou

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SOPRANO

Lily Carmichael

Lindsey Carney

Jessica Corrigan

Faith Crossan

Luna Dantagnan

Jessica Gambino

Emma Krewson

Chloe Lucente

Victoria Lumia

Allison Maney

Marlena St. Jean

Kimberly Waigwa

ALTO

Mary Bond

Alison Crosley

Isabella DiPasquale

Cat ElginSmith

Tatiana Hayward

Alicia Melendez

Corinne Price

Macey Roberts

Marian Sunnergren

TENOR

Zachary Alvarado

Roberto Guevara

James Hatter

Blake Levinson

Brandon Scribner

Reid Shriver

Heron Ziegel

BASS

Vinroy Brown

Benjamin Chen

Chase Côté

Daniel Jackson

Kareem Mack

Alexander Nguyen

Roy Nussbaum

Joshua Powell

Andrew Stern

Seth Wohl

Yilin Xu

Boyer College of Music and Dance

Temple University Choirs

Concert Choir

University Singers

University Voices

University Chorale

Singing Owls

Graduate Conductors Chorus

Recital Chorus

Department of Vocal Arts

Choral Activities Area

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

Mitos Andaya Hart, Associate Director, Choral Activities

Rollo Dilworth, Professor, Choral Music Education

Dustin Cates, Assistant Professor, Choral Music Education

Kathleen Shannon, Adjunct Instructor

Emilily Kosasih and Julia Zavadsky, Adjunct Professors, Conducting

Jeffrey Cornelius, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Alan Harler, Professor Emeritus, Choral Music

Janet Yamron, Professor Emeritus, Music and Music Education

Leslie Cochran, Coordinator, Department of Vocal Arts

The Temple University Choirs have enjoyed a rich tradition of excellence under the batons of some of Philadelphia's most prominent conductors. The six 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 Orchestra at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts.

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 choirs@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 thirty 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.

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