



OREGON COMPOSERS FORUM
featuring
ESTELÍ GOMEZ

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Season 117, Program 62

Beall Concert Hall
Sunday, April 22, 2018 | 7:30 p.m.



space and breath III: voyelles Alex Bean (b. 1993)

Estelí Gomez, soprano
fixed media

NOTES

space and breath III is the latest iteration in a series of experiments in textless song. I have elected not to use intelligible linguistic material (i.e. words or syllables), and instead have created this music as a series of phonemes (specifically, individual vowels and consonants) that are sung at the particular resonant frequencies of this performance space. In addition, the sound of the singer's voice is filtered through the sound of several different vowels to produce the electronic accompaniment that you will hear. The result is a meditation on the interaction of the voice, the acoustics of the performance space, and the frequencies of the vowel sounds themselves.

My Quiet One

Dan Daly (b. 1990)

Estelí Gomez, soprano
Paul Rudoj, tenor
Laura Eason, horn
Megan Letky, violin
Michael Fleming, violin
Forrest Walker, viola
Jo Eggleston, cello

NOTES

My Quiet One is a short drama for soprano, tenor, horn, and string quartet that explores the healing virtue of sorrow. Through the voice of the tenor, it invites the listener to separate the experience of grief from the shame, guilt, or regret that may accompany it, and to create intimacy by sharing that experience of grief with others. I hope that any listener caught in the midst of sorrow will receive the revelation of worth expressed by the soprano, and say with her, "My eyes overflow with jewels. I will lavish them on the shoulder of someone I love."

Praised for her "clear, bright voice" (New York Times) and "artistry that belies her young years"

(Kansas City Metropolis), soprano **Estelí Gomez** is quickly gaining recognition as a stylish interpreter of early and contemporary repertoires. In January 2014 she was awarded a Grammy with contemporary octet Roomful of Teeth, for best chamber music/small ensemble performance; in November 2011 she received first prize in the Canticum Gaudium International Early Music Vocal Competition in Poznan, Poland. An avid performer of early and new music, Estelí can be heard on the Juno-nominated recording *Salsa Baroque* with Montréal-based Ensemble Caprice, as well as Roomful of Teeth's self-titled debut album, for which composer Caroline Shaw's *Partita* was awarded the 2013 Pulitzer Prize.

Highlights of 2017-8 include her solo debut with the Portland Baroque Orchestra in Bach's B Minor Mass,

a concert of reimagined Phillip Glass at Carnegie Hall with Nico Muhly, Caroline Shaw, and Laurie Anderson,

a duet recital in Cleveland with Colin Davin, guitar, solo teaching residencies at Peabody Conservatory, University of Oregon, Eugene and

University of Missouri, Kansas City,

a tour of Craig Hella Johnson's oratorio *Considering Matthew Shepard*,

and performances with Roomful of Teeth across North America including Berio's *Sinfonia*

with the New York Philharmonic.

Originally from Watsonville, California, Estelí received her Bachelor of Arts with honors in music from Yale College, and Master of Music from McGill University, studying with Sanford Sylvan.

She currently travels and performs full-time.

Silence spirit!
Your hands no longer inspire fear in me.

Rot in your prison!
A cage of brick!
It's what you deserve!

Fresh lain brick!
It is a thing of beauty!
Never had I thought such firmness could make me feel so free!

Another knock?
Do you wish to torture me again?
My suffering has now ended.
It is your that has just begun.

The wall is sealed.
There is no escape.
What a fantasy.

I dedicate the text of this piece to Dani Miles, whose genuine and thoughtfully expressed ideas helped me find its narrative, and the music to Estelí Gomez, whose generous mentorship has helped me grow into an enthusiastic and committed composer of vocal music.

TEXT

T: Still so quiet...
Why not weep?
When we were children,
A bruise was reason enough
To cry and cry,
And ask to be held.

S: How quickly I learned to lament my wounds
With secret tears, and quiet cries.
Now, sorrow crushes my heart,
And I cannot weep.

T: My quiet one,
Are you ashamed?
Shame is not as fixed as you believe.
When sorrows flow,
They sweep away every trace of shame.

My quiet one,
Let sorrows flow.
Let sorrows sweep away every trace of shame.

S: My eyes overflow with jewels;
I will lavish them on the shoulder of someone I love.

T, S: My loving one,
My beautiful one,
Will you weep with me?

(Text by the composer)

Beacon of Night

Daniel Delay (b. 1994)

Performers, instruments:
 Estelí Gomez, soprano
 Tori Calderone, flute
 Jo Eggleston, cello

NOTES

Beacon of Night is a deeply introspective piece about finding a moment of transcendence and communion with the night sky after enduring a long day of stifling bureaucracy. While these moments may be brief, within them we can find eternity.

TEXT

Beacon of Night
 by Daniel DeLay

Today, today I have been locked in
 small rooms. Thinking only
 of the mundane.

Ah, finally I have emerged
 into twilight, myself a beacon
 of night.

The silent city is faintly luminous;
 lights echo off the low, dark clouds.
 Is this calm solitude real, or another dream?
 The abrasive sun has set;

we are now in the kingdom of the moon. Outside
 in the glowing dark I am free at last.

A peaceful rain engulfs me,
 singing its celestial song of
 the clouds--and higher still--

own comfort zone; searching for new ideas or meaning without
 venturing into the unknown.

TEXT

“Dominus”

Curses & Epithets

Joseph Vranas (b. 1992)

Performers, instruments:
 Estelí Gomez, soprano
 Linda Jenkins, alto flute
 Forrest Walker, viola
 Grant Mack, piano
 Luke Smith, snare

NOTES

Curses & Epithets is inspired by the stories of Edgar Allen Poe, specifically “The Tell-Tale Heart” and “The Black Cat”. This musical scene begins after a battered woman has taken revenge and murdered her abuser, burying their body behind a brick wall. A phantom knocking from behind the wall mocks her, but she relishes in her new-found freedom. However, her joy is soon interrupted when the abuser speaks, revealing the event as an escape from reality while she hides in a closet, the abuser knocking at the door.

TEXT

What’s that?
 Is this my heartbeat?
 No, my heart stands still,
 while yours beats no longer!

Another?
 I hear it clearly now.
 A pounding from the wall.

Again! Again!

to catch a momentary glimpse, but a bird implores you to leave, saying, “Humankind cannot bear very much reality.”

TEXT

Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.
Other echoes
Inhabit the garden. Shall we follow?
Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner. Through the first gate,
Into our first world.
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, through the vibrant air,
And the unseen eyebeam crossed, for the roses
Had the look of flowers that are looked at.
~ T. S. Eliot

Dominus Weya

Andrew Reid (b. 1996)

Performers, instruments:
Estelí Gomez, soprano
Carly Walker, mezzo-soprano
Paul Rudoï, tenor

NOTES

Dominus Weya is a vocal trio that focuses on the timbres of the voice. The only real text present in the work is the word “Dominus,” with the rest of the piece using a technique called vocalise – the implementation of wordless vocal sounds that affect the shape of the voice, but hold no rhetorical meaning. The piece itself is inspired by the concept of introspection from within one’s

the concealed stars suspended
beyond our world.

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud – Samuel Lord Kalcheim (b.1990)
Concert Aria for Soprano and Chamber Ensemble

Performers, instruments:
Estelí Gomez, soprano
Brynna Paros, flute
Hannah Pell, oboe
Daniel Yim, bassoon
Valerie Nelson, violin
Megan Letky, violin
Forrest Walker, viola
Titus Young, cello
Samuel Lord Kalcheim, conductor

NOTES

I set this Wordsworth poem as an extended Mozartean sort of concert aria for soprano and what is essentially a miniature orchestra. The music shifts between lyrical, cantabile phrases, and shorter, playful figures, the voice and instruments playing off one another. The piece culminates in an elaborate coloratura passage, answered by an ebullient coda for instruments alone. I hope I have conveyed some of the joy and serenity of I find in this text.

TEXT

I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud
By William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
 And twinkle on the milky way,
 They stretched in never-ending line
 Along the margin of a bay:
 Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
 Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
 Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
 A poet could not but be gay,
 In such a jocund company:
 I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
 What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
 In vacant or in pensive mood,
 They flash upon that inward eye
 Which is the bliss of solitude;
 And then my heart with pleasure fills,
 And dances with the daffodils.

Leaves

Sasha Kow (b. 1995)

Performers, instruments:
 Estelí Gomez, soprano
 Simeon Brown, violin
 Luke Smith, vibraphone

NOTES

I interpreted this poem from the perspective of a leaf going through different stages of birth, rebirth; life and new life. There are moments in the text that I find incredibly profound, specifically the second and third stanza where the protagonist accepts the compromise that comes with what it is for something greater. Meditating on this poem drew my attention to actual leaves over the winter and how the new leaves that come do not necessarily mean the old ones die, but are renewed instead.

TEXT

Leaves by Sara Teasdale

One by one, like leaves from a tree,
 All my faiths have forsaken me;
 But the stars above my head
 Burn in white and delicate red,
 And beneath my feet the earth
 Brings the sturdy grass to birth.

I who was content to be
 But a silken-singing tree,
 But a rustle of delight
 In the wistful heart of night,
 I have lost the leaves that knew
 Touch of rain and weight of dew.

Blinded by a leafy crown
 I looked neither up nor down—
 But the little leaves that die
 Have left me room to see the sky;
 Now for the first time I know
 Stars above and earth below.

Burnt Norton

Susanna Payne-Passmore (b. 1990)

Performers, instruments:
 Estelí Gomez, soprano
 John King, piano
 Luke Smith, crotales

NOTES

In Eliot's poem, you explore a secret rose garden where you can walk passages of time untaken. The garden is haunted by absences: unheard birdcalls and untrod leaves. Gradually you realize that garden is filled with unseen guests too, echoes of yourself visible only in the reflected sunlight. Later in the poem, you manage