

ABOUT ESTELÍ GOMEZ



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 Gomez 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, Gomez can be heard on the Juno-nominated recording Salsa Baroque with Montreal-based Ensemble Caprice, as well as Roomful of Teeth’s self-titled debut album, for which composer Caroline Shaw was awarded the 2013 Pulitzer Prize.

Highlights of 2013-4 include teaching and performance residencies at Yale, Princeton, and University of Oregon, Eugene; soprano solos in a recording of Robert Kyr’s Songs of the Soul with Conspirare (Harmonia Mundi); Monteverdi’s Vespers of 1610 in Washington, D.C. with Grammy-nominated chamber ensemble Seraphic Fire; and participation in Helmuth Rilling’s final season with Oregon Bach Festival.

Originally from Santa Cruz, California, Gomez 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. More at her website, esteligomez.wix.com

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Season 113, Program 78



UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

VANGUARD SERIES From Leaf to Wind

featuring
Estelí Gomez
soprano

and
The Sospiro Quintet
Alexander Johnson, director
Kathryn Brunhaver
violoncello
Colleen White
clarinet

Bamboo Grove, Portland
Saturday, May 17, 2014 | 8 p.m.
Beall Concert Hall
Sunday, May 18, 2014 | 8 p.m.



*And When Summer Comes to an End*John Goforth
(b. 1990)Estelí Gomez, soprano
Colleen White, clarinet
Kathryn Brunhaver, violoncello*From Leaf to Wind*Matt Zavortink
(b. 1989)Estelí Gomez, soprano
Matt Zavortink, flute
Kathryn Brunhaver, cello*Somebody's Darling*David Sackmann
(b. 1990)Estelí Gomez, soprano
Kathryn Brunhaver, violoncello*Sinking Song*Jacob Walls
(b. 1989)Estelí Gomez, soprano
Heather Holmquest, mezzo-soprano
Alyse Jamieson/Jan Nelson, alto*Invocation to the Gods of War*Alexander Bean
(b. 1993)

Estelí Gomez, soprano

Sanctus

from the Mass Ordinary

Holy, Holy, Holy
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,
Hosanna in the highest.

Agnus Dei

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

For this treatment of the Latin mass text, I wanted to explore the high contrapuntal textures of the *stile antico*, or “antique style” of vocal writing used by composers in the 15th and 16th centuries. The Sanctus movement begins with a homo-rhythmic texture that gradually breaks into individual voices while singing the text “Lord God of Hosts” and then remains contrapuntal for the remainder of the movement. The Agnus Dei movement is intended to be a longer journey as a single movement and is the most secularly-spiritual movement of the *Missa Brevis*; it begins dark and earthy, mostly confined texturally to imitative counterpoint. This movement is intended to move from a place of captivity to a place of freedom, confinement to emancipation. After much angst in the final textual iteration of “have mercy on us,” the music moves to a peaceful, resolved re-statement of “Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world” that is less imitative (read: more liberated!) than the first iterations. The music for the text “have mercy on us” is referenced while singing the text “grant us peace,” representing a spiritual transformation from submissive pleading to liberation of the soul. This movement is intended to assert that spirituality need not be a dogmatic obsession with adherence to a code written by men, but an internal transcendence experienced while meditating on the vastness of space, the vividness of reality, and the beauty of life.

Alexander Johnson is currently based in Eugene, OR, where he is pursuing a masters degree in music composition. He is also an active choral singer and is the director and conductor of the *Sospiro Vocal Ensemble*.

it caught me by surprise--and i laughed

i laughed and the echo of it shook me
and the beauty around me, though i could not see it
was overwhelming and unintentional and ordinary

opening my eyes, the darkness was comfortable
the cerulean wings adorned with saffron trim
welcomed me, embraced me, comforted me in the end

and though i could not see, i felt its prick
the stinging was heavenly torture, and as I fell
and time stood still, suddenly I knew my place

for in beauty there is a pain so pointed
that even the blind can see what the seeing cannot--
beauty impatiently anticipates death--yet death?

rebirth

From the poet:

Even as a child I was acutely aware that beauty and horror are not mutually exclusive. Inspired by a dream from my youth, *butterfly nightmares* explores and exposes such contradictions as the unlikely and relentless juxtaposition of life and death, which becomes almost quotidian with age, through the eyes of a child. Yet the sophisticated vocabulary highlights how the meaning that we make of experience through language can be both disconnected from and intimately intertwined with experience itself. In dreaming, the butterfly's prick left me dead. Upon waking, the dream itself—and these words—gave me new life.

From the composer:

butterfly nightmares presents a depiction of a vivid childhood dream in which a seemingly innocuous object, i.e. a butterfly, represents both life and death, or "beauty and pain," to quote poet Brian J. Reece. The soprano voice seemed to be ideal to represent a young child, who in this text is both a central character and a passive observer, helpless to prevent the butterfly's actions. The clarinet and cello reflect the child's emotional reactions and even the butterfly itself fluttering around and eventually enveloping the speaker of this text.

You Roses: A Prayer with Rexroth

Robert Chastain
(b. 1981)

Estelí Gomez, soprano
Robert Chastain, bassoon

butterfly nightmares

Alexander Johnson
(b. 1990)

Estelí Gomez, soprano
Colleen White, clarinet
Kathryn Brunhaver, violoncello

Missa Brevis

Alexander Johnson
(b. 1990)

III. Sanctus
IV. Agnus Dei

The Sospiro Quintet
Heather Holmquest, soprano
Alyse Jamieson/Jan Nelson, alto
Stephen Rodgers, tenor
Zeke Fetrow, baritone
Alexander Johnson, bass

**The pieces sung by Estelí will repeat for a second listening opportunity after the performance of the two Missa Brevis movements.*

And When Summer Comes to an End

Nina Cassian

And when summer comes to an end
it's like the world coming to an end.
Wilderness and terror - everywhere!

Days shrink
till all dignity's gone.
Wet slabs of cloth
drape our bodies:
dejected coats.
And the we shiver, stumbling
into the holes of Winter Street
on the corner of Decline...

What's the good of living
with the idea of Spring
dangerous as any Utopia?

And When Summer Comes to an End is an exploration into the idea of expectations and the danger of not living in the moment. Cassian's text questions the usefulness of utopias. The clarinet and cello are used to create an atmosphere that is quiet but unsettled within which the singer can explore the text.

John Goforth is a composer based out of Eugene, Oregon. Recent collaborations include performances and readings by cellist Jeffrey Zeigler, flutist Molly Barth, pianist David Riley, cellist and vocalist Kathryn Brunhaver, bassist Milo Fultz, members of Fireworks New Music Ensemble, the Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and Eighth Blackbird. John is a master's student at the University of Oregon.

[Untitled]

Julie Michael
(From Leaf to Wind)

nothing is still :
eyelids flicker
branches whine
dustcolors leap from leaf to wind.
Look nowhere
Listen to no one in particular

If your silence lights
on two trees side by side,

And billions of paper dollars
Spent to disembowel mankind.
If they go on forever,
They will have realized less
Value than I can in one hour
Sitting at my typewriter.

You Roses: A prayer with Rexroth, reflects my desire to celebrate Kenneth Rexroth, one of the beatnik triumverant that consisted of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and Kenneth Rexroth. I discovered his work while living in San Francisco. I was very interested in setting local poets and was acquainted with Rexroth's daughter at my home parish of St. Dominic's Catholic Church. The spiritual undertones are what attracted me to Rexroth's work above his contemporaries, and they are the very reason I became acquainted with his work through a church in San Francisco. These undertones also led me to take these three short texts and "bookend" them with Vos flores rosarum by Hildegard von Bingen.

Robert Chastain (b. 1981), MM San Francisco Conservatory of Music, BM University of Florida, is currently working towards the PhD in Composition and Theory at the University of Oregon. His composition teachers include Robert Kyr, David Crumb, George Tsontakis, Narcis Bonet, Daniel J. Becker, Paul Richards, and Paul Basler. He has also presented in masterclasses and taken lessons with John Adams, John Corigliano, Libby Larsen, and Stephen Hartke. In addition to his academic studies, he also received the 2010 Susan and Ford Schumann Fellowship to the Aspen Summer Music Festival and School, received a Williamson Foundation Grant and the EAMA Michael Iovenko Composition Scholarship to attend the 2011 European American Musical Alliance, and attended the 2009 Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium. Currently, he serves as assistant director of the latter symposium.

When not composing, Mr. Chastain spends his time realizing the work of his colleagues as a bassoonist, conductor, and choral second bass. You can find his full professional bio and recordings of original music at robertchastain.net

butterfly nightmares

Brian J. Reece

the butterfly's wings blinded me
as it swiftly fluttered through the room
and the fleeting blue of its wings brought me hope
that though i could see no longer
earnest though i was to watch
i was ready for the gift it brought

and in a moment of amaurotic reverie
glee escaped my throat so quickly that

In illo in quonon erat constitutio a capite.
 Sit honor in consortio vestro qui estis instrumentum ecclesie
 et qui in vulneribus vestri sanguinis undatis.

*(You roses who in the shedding of your blood are blessed,
 redolent in the greatest joys and drawing out what flowed
 from the inner mind before time. In Him, in whom there was no beginning. Be there
 honor in your company, you who are the
 instruments of the church, and who stream in the
 wounds of your blood.*

Me

Kenneth Rexroth

The bleeding hearts in the garden
 Bloom early, but never fruit.
 Every year they have spread further,
 Underground, by creeping rootstocks.
 Zeno's arrow in my heart,
 I float in the plunging year.

The Light on the Pewter Dish
 Kenneth Rexroth
 Driving across the bridge
 Above San Francisco Bay,
 The United States Navy
 Anchored, rank by deadly rank,
 In the water under me,
 And over me the sky filled
 With hundreds of bombing planes,
 My mind wandering idly,
 I was suddenly aware
 That Jacob Boehme flourished
 During the Thirty Years' War.

Me Again

Kenneth Rexroth

They say I do not realize
 The values of my own time.
 What preposterous nonsense!
 Ten years of wars, mountains of dead,
 One hundred million armed men

ask not which one
 bends
 into the other's edges
 And forget
 that you move as well

This piece is presented without comment by the composer.

Matt Zavortink is a composer and flutist from Eugene, Oregon, where he is currently pursuing a master's degree in composition. His pieces have been performed by groups such as PRISM Quartet, the University of Puget Sound Wind Ensemble, Eugene Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, turnEnsemble, and Verbal Transcription. Some current interests include extended instrumental techniques and timbres, minimalism and spectralism, and the use of computer programs in the creative process.

Somebody's Darling

Marie la Coste

Into a ward of the white washed walls,
 Where the dead and dying lay,
 Wounded by bayonets, shells and balls,
 Somebody's darling was borne one day.
 Somebody's darling so young and brave
 Wearing yet on his pale sweet face,
 Soon to be hid by the dust of the grave,
 The lingering light of his boyhood's grace.
 Matted and damp are the curls of gold
 Kissing the snow of that fair young brow;
 Pale are the lips of delicate mold –
 Somebody's darling is dying now.
 Kiss him once for somebody's sake,
 Murmur a prayer soft and low;
 One bright curl from it's fair mates take;
 They were somebody's pride you know.
 Somebody's hand has rested there;
 Was it a mother's soft and white?
 And have the lips of a sister fair
 Been baptized in the waves of light?
 God knows best! He was somebody's love,
 Somebody's heart enshrined him there.
 Somebody wafted his name above,
 Night and morn on the wings of prayer.
 Somebody wept when he marched away,
 Looking so handsome brave and grand;

Somebody's kiss on his forehead lay;
 Somebody clung to his parting hand.
 Somebody's watching and waiting for him,
 Yearning to hold him again to her heart;
 And there he lies with his blue eyes dim,
 And the smiling child-like lips apart.
 Tenderly bury the fair young dead,
 Pausing to drop on his grave a tear;
 Carve on the wooden slab at his head,
 "Somebody's darling slumbers here."

Somebody's Darling is a vocal adaptation of the civil war era poem of the same title from Marie la Coste. The piece explores the dark character in the poem, using folk-sounding melodies along with ideas of dissonance and uneasiness.

David Sackmann, a composer currently based out of Eugene, OR, has written music for choral groups, chamber ensembles, percussion ensembles, and wind ensemble. A graduate of Gonzaga University, David is currently pursuing a M.M. in music composition at the University of Oregon. His works have been performed by the Gonzaga University Wind Symphony, the American Creators Chorus, the Gonzaga University Wind Symphony Percussion Ensemble, as well as many other chamber groups. Along with composing, David is the acting director of The TaiHei Ensemble, a contemporary world music ensemble based out of Eugene.

Sinking Song

Sinking Song was inspired by those composers and bands who use speech and song in novel ways to create ear-catching textures. By this I mean composers such as Meredith Monk and Robert Ashley and bands such as Dirty Projectors and Roomful of Teeth, the latter being a band Ms. Gomez sings in herself and which has recently met with wide acclaim.

Oregon-based composer/trumpeter Jacob Walls writes music for orchestra, large ensemble, chamber groups, and voice. His music explores the intersections of chromaticism, lyricism, and angularity—often drawing on familiar musical elements, other times cutting against them. He is studying for master's degrees in composition and theory at the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance, where he teaches undergraduate music theory and studies with Robert Kyr and David Crumb. He co-directs turnEnsemble New Music with fellow composers Noah Jenkins and James Bean.

Invocation to the Gods of War — excerpts from a speech by President George W. Bush:

My fellow citizens. At this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people and to defend the world from grave danger...

To all the men and women of the United States armed forces now in the Middle East, the peace of a troubled world and the hopes of an oppressed people now depend on you. That trust is well placed...

I know that the families of our military are praying that all those who serve will return safely and soon.

Millions of Americans are praying with you for the safety of your loved ones and for the protection of the innocent...

The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder.

We will meet that threat now with our army, air force, navy, coastguard and marines so that we do not have to meet it later with armies of firefighters and police and doctors on the streets of our cities.

Now that conflict has come, the only way to limit its duration is to apply decisive force and I assure you this will not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory.

My fellow citizens, the dangers to our country and the world will be overcome. We will pass through this time of peril and carry on the work of peace. We will defend our freedom. We will bring freedom to others and we will prevail.

If Invocation to the Gods of War is a Dadaist satire, it is not a satire of George W. Bush; indeed, such a task is better left to the legions of pundits and comedians who can accomplish such a task far better than I. Rather, this piece is a satire of the human desire for war. The text is derived from George W. Bush's announcement of the beginning of the Iraq War. Bush's speech is broken into syllables and randomized, such that the language of war has been rendered virtually meaningless.

Alex Bean is a student at the University of Oregon, pursuing a degree in composition and organ performance. Past composition teachers include Robert Kyr, David Crumb, Terry McQuilken, and Kevin Walczyk. Past organ teachers include Barbara Baird.

Vos flores rosarum

Hildegard von Bingen

Vos flores rosarum
 qui in effusione sanguinis vestri beati estis
 in maximis gaudiis redolentibus
 et sudantibus in emptione
 que fluxit de interiori mente
 consilii manentis ante evum.