



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Department of Music and Theatre

Jodi Goble

Composition Recital

Friday, September 17, 2021
7:30pm
Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall

Program

De Virginibus (2012)

O pulchrae facies
O nobilissima viriditas
O dulcissime amator

Jodi Goble (b. 1974)

Elizabeth Deutmeyer, soprano

Peter Quince at the Clavier (2006, revised 2021)

Just as my fingers on these keys
In the clear water
Soon, with a noise like tambourines
Beauty is momentary in the mind

Drew Duncan, tenor

*Song-Lost World: Six Songs of Yone Noguchi (2020)**

Song in air
Under the moon
In the fog
At night
My song is sung
Spring

Shelby Van Nordstrand, soprano

Intermission

*Such A Thing Again (2020)**

Chad Sonka, baritone
Jonathan Sturm, violin
Julie Sturm, cello

*The Words We Need (2021)**

Jacelyn Rudderow, Christina Wyckoff, Ashlyn Haack,
Sophia Cataldo, Madison Mayfield, soloists

Cantamus

Jennifer Rodgers, conductor

* premiere performance

Text and Translations

O pulchrae facies

O lovely faces that gaze upon God
and turn upwards toward the dawn,
O blessed virgins, how noble you are!
In you the King can see His own face, for in you
he sealed all the beauties of heaven,
where too you are the most verdant garden,
the fragrance of all its flowers.

O nobilissima viriditas

O noble green shoots,
Your roots are in the sun
And in His clear brilliant calm
You shine within a wheel
No human intelligence
Can comprehend.
You are surrounded by
The embrace of holy service
And of divine ministry.
You blush like the dawn of morning
And burn like the flames of the sun.

O dulcissime amator

O sweet lover, of such a sweet embrace:
Help us to keep our holy vows!
In dust, alas! we were conceived,
In the guilt of Adam.
So hard it is to refuse a taste of that fruit.
Strengthen our resolve, o Christ!
We burn in our desire to follow you.
How hard it is for us to imitate your innocence,
You, the spotless King of angels.
Still, we put our trust in you, for you desire
To discover us, as gems in the midst of rubbish.
We cry to you, Bridegroom and Consoler,
Who redeems us on the cross,
For in your blood we are promised to you—
Your blood our wedding gift,
As we choose you, the Son of God,
refusing mortal love.
O beautiful form, o fragrance sweeter than all
desired delight:
We seek you in this wasteland of tears
with sighs of longing.
When may we look upon you and remain with you?
We live within the world, but hold you in our minds
And embrace you in our hearts
as though you were with us.
You, the mighty lion, have burst the heavens,
Descending to the palace of the Virgin's womb,
Destroying death and building new life
in the golden city.
Grant us Her company to dwell with you,
o Bridegroom,
You who saved us from the jaws of the devil
That dragged our primal parents into death.

Peter Quince at the Clavier

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the self-same sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.
Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna;
Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders, watching, felt
The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.
She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.
Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.
She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
Fetching her woven scarves,
On timid feet,
Yet wavering.
A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned —
A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.
They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side;
And as they murmured, their refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.
Anon, their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.
Then, the simpering Byzantines
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

over →

(Peter Quince at the Clavier continued)

So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of winter, done repenting.
So maidens die, to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.
Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now, in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

Song in Air

Like a rainbow,
All the color,
All the music,
And all the touch, —
She suddenly rises
Over the breast of shadow.
How the world turns to a song!
She is liberation and life,
Hers is a nerve-thrill,
Not a thought or truth.
Mystically she breathes in and out
Art (let me call it so):
And when she more suddenly falls,
What a song-lost world!

Under the Moon

There is nothing
Like the moon-night when the rich noble stars
And maiden roses interchange their long looks of love.
There is nothing like the moon-night
When I raise my face from the land of loss
Unto the golden air, and calmly learn
How perfect it is to grow still as a star.
There is nothing like the moon-night
When I walk upon the freshest dews,
And amid the warmest breezes,
With all the thought of God
And all the bliss of man, as Adam
Not yet driven from Eden, and to whom
Eve was not yet born. What a bird
Dreams in the moonlight is my dream;
What a rose sings is my song.

In the Fog

When I am lost
In the deep body of the mist on a hill,
The universe seems built
With me as its pillar.
Am I the god upon the face
Of the deep, nay, deepless
Deepness in the beginning?

At Night

At night the Universe grows lean,
Sober-faced with intoxication.
The shadow of the half-sphere
Curtains down closely against my world
Like a doorless cage.
Listen, frogs in the pond,
(The world is a pond itself)
Cry out for the light, for the truth!
The curtains rattle ghostily along,
Bloodily biting my soul,
The winds knocking on my cabin door
With their shadowy hands.

My Song is Sung

My song is sung, but a moment...
The song of voice is merely the body, (the body dies,)
And the real part of the song, its soul,
 remains after it is sung;
Yea, it remains in the vibration of thy waves
 of heart-sea
Echoing still my song,
And through my soul thou soarest out of thy dust and griefs.

Spring

Spring,
Winged Spring,
A laughing butterfly,
Flashes away,
Rosy-cheeked Spring,
Angel of a moment.
The little shadow
 of my lover perfumed.
Maiden Spring,
Now fades
The shadow,
The golden shadow,
With all the charm.
Spring,
Naughty sweet Spring:
A proud coquette,
Born to laugh but not to live.
Spring,
Flying Spring,
A beautiful runaway,
Leaves me in tears,
But my soul follows after,
Till I catch her
Next March.
Spring,
Spring!

Such A Thing Again

(printed by special permission of *Melanie Faith and FutureCycle Press*)

That first wave
neither of my sisters
came down with it.

But a few boys
and girls in my class did.
Mable Young
put her head down
during Penmanship
and her father had to come for her
that afternoon.

I was seven,
just a couple of years younger than you.

La Grippe
the headlines called it in New York,
Philadelphia, Peoria, Modesto. A gripe,
achy tremors rattling the joints
like bone plates turned tectonic,
crumbling

inside from quiver, from fever,
from internal
drowning.

They try:
suspending
from their necks
tiny pouches
of garlic,

onion soup,
onion salads,
onion omelets,
onion syrup,
soaking head-to-toe
in onion baths,

goose grease
poultices,
salt up the nose,
shovels of hot coals
with brown sugar,
a vaporizer
of blue-green smoke,

gargling
boric acid
and sodium bicarbonate,

paper masks
with their noses
still exposed.

Mama wore a gauze mask
in the house

like she read people did
in bigger places like Philly and San
Francisco.

In those days, they thought
if you just covered your mouth,
you were fine.

Nobody knew where it came from,
how it spread, who was next.

It was a panic.
People put keep-away signs on
their front doors.

We didn't visit Mama's cousins
like we did every Sunday.

There were bells
in the evening. Pastor Glynn
at the Presbyterian Church on Main
struck one bell
for each report of the stricken.
We lived two blocks away
in a rental house that belonged
to Mama's cousin.

Mama made us
stay quiet when the bells sounded.

We stared down into our plates
of green beans and ham hock.
It was terribly sad. Some poor souls
lost both parents
within days.

It wasn't uncommon for the bells to
ring solid
for eight or ten minutes.

The second wave
in 1919 was when I came down with it.
My little sister Eunice got it first.

School shut down for a few weeks.
No going to the store, either.
Main and Park Street were ghost towns.
Many of us didn't go to the hospital
unless we were really bad off.
Only rich people like the Chandlers
who owned the mill or the Finnleys
whose daddy was the state inspector
had nursing care or went to St. Agnes.

I remember a terrible fever,
aches all over
like the regular flu, but more so.
Coughing so hard and hoarse
it rattled in my chest,
made my throat raw.

And the terrible visions!
I thought I saw Eunice's face peel back
to bone.

Another time, my mother
brought me a cold compress.
Her raven hair swept up in a comb
became a black panther
with snarling fangs, ready to strike
me in my bed.

I fought her; I'm ashamed of that,
but in the delirium,
I wouldn't let that cat bite into me.
For some reason, my sister Rose
never scared me. Mama had her mind
me.

Things got so bad,
even in a town as small town as ours,
there wasn't time for any funerals—
Father Costas at St. Mary's,
Pastor Glynn,
Minister Edwards at First Baptist,
they couldn't conduct that many
services.

It was a week
before I could sit up in bed
and run a brush through my hair
to sort out the snarls.
Another few days more
until I could walk
across the room
without swaying like a top
or passing out.

Imagine: the feeling
of running water from the pump
heated on the kettle
over my hair. Imagine:
the feeling of running bare feet
across grass just starting to green,
darting across that green
with arms open.

I felt stunned amazement.
Fresh air, running,
life anew—
Lazarus awoken from the tomb.

I'm not sure. I was blessed
or I was one of the lucky ones.
Take your pick.

Can we wrap our minds
around not knowing why?
Not on human understanding.
Can we survive in the grips of pain,
thrive in the throes of uncertainty?
With faith. Only with faith.

I tell you, though,
the spirit of this town is tough.
We banded together;
we watched out for each other.
We got through it;
may we never have to
get through such a thing again.

The Words We Need

Take a deep breath
Let it out

You belong
You are wanted
I know things are tough
But you are enough
You're stronger than you think you are
You matter more than you think you do
If I ever lost you I don't know what I'd do

Take a deep breath
And let it out

Be still
Be gentle
Be grateful
Don't be afraid
Seek out the truth
Write your own story

And breathe

I miss you
I love you
I'm proud of you
You can lean on me
I will never leave you
You can come to me with anything
We'll get through this together

Take a deep breath
And let it out

Let it out

Let it out

Notes From the Composer

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179), the tenth child of a minor German count, was given away to the Catholic Church as a "tithe" by her family when she was eight years old. She took Benedictine orders when she was fifteen, and was elected to the office of Abbess by the other nuns in her community upon the death of her mentor. Her writings include nine books, nearly a hundred poems, more than seventy songs, and a morality play. She was also a master gardener and herbalist, and managed to expand and maintain control of her devoted community until her death at 81, despite political maneuvering from her overseers in the Church and chronic pain that kept her frequently bedridden.

Hildegard was revered as a mystic — from the age of three, she experienced visions and 'flashes of divine light', accompanied both by crippling migraine headaches and bursts of intense creativity. The three songs that comprise *De Virginibus* (To the virgins) are part of the larger work *Symphonia armoniae celestium revelationum*, and are addressed to the community of nuns in her care. This setting contains musical references to the original chants Hildegard wrote to accompany her texts — some of the earliest known music to be written down and published in the Western world.

Wallace Stevens' (1879-1955) "Peter Quince at the Clavier" retells the story of Susanna and the Elders from the apocryphal book of Daniel: the chaste Susanna is observed at her bath by the elders and later refuses them when they attempt to blackmail her into unwanted intimacy. The elders retaliate by accusing her of adultery. Susanna faces a death sentence, but is exonerated when the elders are cross-examined separately and cannot agree on the details of their lie. In the end, the elders pay for their slander with their own lives. (Opera lovers may recognize this plot as one and the same with Carlisle Floyd's 1956 opera *Susannah*, which updates the story's setting to a small insular community in the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee). The character of Peter Quince is borrowed from another, seemingly unrelated work of fiction: Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which he is the hapless amateur playwright and stage manager of the Mechanicals. His clumsy, fish-out-of-water presence at the harpsichord, as the poem's narrator, is a metaphor for what Stevens believed to be his own inadequate artistry as a writer.

The poem's four sections echo the musical form of a classical symphony. Literary analysis seems to agree that this marriage of poetic and musical forms was deliberate on Stevens' part, and that the text should be understood "not only as a poem about beauty in general, but also, and mainly, about that particular kind of beauty that the power of the human imagination immortalizes in the work of [creating] art." (Luiz Alberto de Miranda, *Wallace Stevens and the Apocrypha*)

Yone Noguchi (1875-1947) was born near Nagoya, Japan, and emigrated to San Francisco in 1893, with hopes of becoming a writer. The relationships he established with the Bohemian community of writers and artists in the Bay Area — and the favorable reception of his first two published books of poetry — led to further opportunities and travel, first to Chicago and then on to New York City, where he wrote his best-known work, a semi-autobiographical novel called *The American Diary of a Japanese Girl*. Noguchi returned to Japan in 1904 to take a position as a professor of English at Keio University, but never achieved the same level of literary success in Japan that he had enjoyed in the United States. Most of his published books are written in English.

Noguchi's writing style was idiosyncratic and revolutionary for his time: meterless, rhymeless free verse, combining the English language with formal structures common to Japanese lyric poetry and fearlessly coining new, evocative, image-rich English words and phrases ('ghostily,' 'moon-night,' 'heart-sea,' 'deep deepless deepness'). His work was enormously influential to Imagism, a movement of poetry that flourished in the United States and England in the 1920s and counted among its members the poets Sara Teasdale, Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, and Edna St. Vincent Millay.

While many of the Imagists are household names today, Noguchi fell into relative obscurity in the decades following his return to Japan and is only now beginning to receive credit for the movement he inspired. His scandalous private life (open bisexuality, secret marriage to an American woman, an illegitimate child) caused public opinion to turn against him; the xenophobia and anti-Asian/anti-Socialist sentiment that was rampant in America in the early twentieth century also contributed to his erasure from the canon. Scholars of queer history, transnational literature, and Asian studies have begun in the last few decades to resurrect his work and legacy, but he is still best known today as the father of mid-century sculptor Isamu Noguchi, designer of the iconic Noguchi Table.

These six poems are chosen from across three volumes of Noguchi's work (*From the Eastern Seas*, *From East To West*, *The Pilgrimage*), and were set in late summer 2020, after it was clear that we would not return in the fall to life and art as we knew it to exist pre-COVID. It did not occur to me at the time that the texts were linked in any particularly meaningful way, but taken as a whole, it's fairly clear that they form a love letter to live music, and a lament for its (temporary) loss.

I first encountered *This Passing Fever*, **Melanie Faith's** extraordinary, gripping book of poems about the end of World War I and the 1918 influenza epidemic, in April 2020. The book follows these cataclysmic world events through the eyes of the citizens of a small Kansas town and its nearby Army base, jumping narrators as it moves from poem to poem. I read through the whole book in one sitting (two a.m. to four a.m. on a Tuesday night) and then went back to follow individual threads: the pastor who climbs a bell tower every evening to count that day's dead in bell-pulls for his quarantined neighbors to hear, the influenza-stricken soldier whose fever feeds his PTSD, the whist players who collapse over their card game, the volunteers building coffins for infants out of lumberyard scraps, the overwhelmed nurse who wheels sheet-covered bodies onto the hospital patio because there are no rooms left to hold them inside.

After my second reading, I reached out to Melanie (again, in the middle of the night, in a rambling email full of superlatives) and asked for her permission to set the texts. I am deeply and profoundly grateful that she trusted me enough with her words to agree; she's been the most fabulous collaborator I could have hoped for. The work that results is a monodrama narrated by Marcus Donovan-Smith, who catches influenza as a child and lives to tell his experiences, years later, to a group of elementary schoolchildren, as part of an oral history project. Spending Summer 2020 setting his words of community, perseverance, and hope kept hope—and the promise of an eventual return to musical community—alive for me as well.

In January 2021, when Dr. Jennifer Rodgers approached me about the possibility of writing something for **Cantamus**, we had a fabulous conversation about prospective texts and then ultimately decided to source the words from the singers themselves. Jen polled the choir with the following questions:

1. What has no one ever told you, that you need to hear?
2. What do you need to tell someone else, that you never have?

The text for *The Words We Need* is compiled from their responses.

Cantamus

Soprano

Bridget Buol
Sophie Elisabeth Byroade
Ashlyn Haack
Lillian Kelley
Katherine Leiseth
Carlie Mauss
Eily Mickelson
Anna Spahn
Jennie Dianne Wohl
Christina Wyckoff
Sau-Qwan Yap
Thea Alex
Lillian Bombeck
Shiarette Chantal Contreras Rivera
Grace Hagedorn
Olivia Heller
Kaitlyn Meylor
Teija Mitchell
Megan Tiff
Kaitlin Tjostem
Laura Ann Toennies
Nikole Vollmer
Emiline Vos

Alto

Odosasere Amadasun
Sarah Clawson
Sparrow Hartmann
Madison Mayfield
Leah Metzger
Grace Reiss
Kenady Sandbulte
Vanessa Sivets
Kendall Stenseth
Sophia Stone
Gwendolyn Thorne
Amber Vandekieft
Carlee Carpenter
Sophia Cataldo
Carmen Chan
Ellen Kanne
Zoë Meaney
Adeline Meyer
Lydia Papiboune
Jacelyn Rudderow
Jennifer Seth
Allison Van Dyke
Lydia VanNausdle

Upcoming Events

Lincoln Klopfenstein, Tenor Saturday, September 18, 2021 Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall	7:30pm	Joby Bell - 33rd Organists of Iowa Sunday, September 26, 2021 Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall	3:00pm
Collage of Choirs Sunday, September 19, 2021 Parks Library Lawn	3:00pm	Jazz Night: New Kids on the Block Wednesday, September 29, 2021 Martha-Ellen Tye Recital Hall	7:30pm
Climate Change Theatre Action Thursday, September 23, 2021 Parks Library	5:15pm	Campanile - Carillon Model Concert Friday, October 1, 2021 Sukup Atrium, Biorenewables Complex	12:30pm

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