

Faculty Recital Series

Thursday, March 23 2017
8:00 p.m.

soprano **Stephanie Tingler**
piano **Martha Thomas**

PROGRAM

Florence Price (1887-1953) *My Soul's Been Anchored in de Lord*

Hall Johnson (1880-1970) *City Called Heaven*

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) *He's Got the Whole World*

Libby Larsen (Born 1950) *Margaret Songs*

Bright Rails

So Little There

Beneath the Hawthorne Tree

Richard Hageman (1881-1966) *Music I Heard with You*
Christ Went Up into the Hills
Charity
At the Well

INTERMISSION

Lori Laitman (Born 1955) "Beyond All Price" from *The Scarlet Letter*

Elinor Remick Warren (1900-1991) *Snow Towards Evening*
Heather
God Be in My Heart

John Jacob Niles (1892-1980) *The Lass from the Low COUNTRY*

Celius Daugherty (1902-1986) *Come All You Fair and Tender Maidens*

Richard Walters, Arr. (Born 1982) *Once I Had a Sweetheart*

Sheldon Harnick (Born 1924) and **Jerry Bock** (1928-2010)
"Vanilla Ice Cream" from *She Loves Me*

RAMSEY CONCERT HALL

About the Artists

Stephanie Tingler

Soprano, Stephanie Tingler, has appeared in opera, concert, oratorio, and recital throughout the United States, England, Japan, South America, and Africa. Her solo engagements range from Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Marin Symphony Orchestra, Villa Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* with the Orquestra Sinfônica de Porto Alegre, and the role of The Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. A scholar of art song repertoire, Tingler has toured with a variety of programs featuring Russian, American, women, and Ohio composers, as well as works for soprano in various chamber settings and sacred works with organ. She has written articles for American National Biography, Oxford Dictionary of American Music, IAWM Journal, and several compact disc reviews. Tingler and Martha Thomas have collaborated on a compact disc, *American Art Songs and Their Poetry*, which is being released by Centaur Records and should be available this spring. Tingler was appointed to the Hugh Hodgson School of Music faculty at the University of Georgia in 1992, where she is currently Associate Professor of Voice, teaching applied voice, vocal pedagogy, and literature.



Martha Thomas

Pianist, Martha Thomas, has been praised for the "lyrical beauty of her playing" and "her mastery of rhythmic and textural complexities." Thomas maintains an active career as a recitalist and collaborative artist, giving concerts across the United States, Canada, Australia, Italy, Slovenia, Serbia, Spain, Portugal, and Kenya. Appearances at conferences and festivals include the American Liszt Society, College Music Society, Music Teachers National Association, World Piano Conference, Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference,

and InterHarmony International Music Festival. She is featured on nine compact disc recordings on the ACA Digital, Centaur, Albany, and Ravello labels.

Thomas is the Despy Karlas Professor of Piano and serves as the Associate Director for Undergraduate Programs at the University of Georgia Hugh Hodgson School of Music. Recipient of the 2012 Teacher of the Year Award from the Georgia Music Teachers Association, her students have enjoyed numerous successes, including recent performances in Carnegie Hall and the Mozarteum in Salzburg.

Spirituals

In the decades after the Civil War, performances of black spirituals moved from the plantation to the concert hall, as they were arranged for chorus by groups such as the Fisk Jubilee Singers and Hampton Singers, and for solo voice and piano beginning with Harry Burleigh. Having acquired the status of art song, spirituals came to be included in the concert repertoire of many classically trained singers.

These arrangements of spirituals tended to keep the original melodic lines intact, while the accompaniments often adapted harmonic and rhythmic techniques from Romantic European practice. In so doing, spirituals lost their original spontaneity as a folk idiom but gained wider audience appeal across interracial lines.

Florence Price (1887-1953) studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, where one of her teachers was George Chadwick. After graduating she taught music at Clark University in Atlanta and later in her hometown of Little Rock AR. She then moved to Chicago where her compositions found increasing exposure. In 1933 the Chicago Symphony premiered her Symphony in E minor, the first composition by an African American woman to be played by a major orchestra. Along with William Grant Still and William Dawson, Price was a pioneer in the emerging world of African-American classical composers. "My Soul's been anchored in the Lord" (1937) is one of her most popular songs. The singer vigorously declares her religious conviction through the repetitive nature of the melody, animated by the dance rhythms in the accompaniment.

The career of **Hall Johnson (1888-1970)** encompassed many musical genres. Born in Athens GA, he attended Clark University in Atlanta, then Allen University in SC and the University of PA. He worked for Vernon and Irene Castle as a member of their dance band and later joined Will Cook's orchestra that toured the country performing blues and popular songs. He also played in the orchestra for the Broadway production of Eubie Blake's Shuffle Along.

Johnson was a lifelong champion of the spiritual and sought to preserve and interpret its legacy through his choral and solo song arrangements. In 1925 he formed the Hall Johnson Choir, which presented many successful concerts on the radio and television and in theaters and films. In 1951 the Choir was chosen by the U.S. State Dept. to represent America at the International Festival of the Arts in Germany.

In "City of Heaven" (1930) Johnson provides a chordal accompaniment that includes some advanced harmonies like added-sixth chords and various forms of seventh chords, imbuing the spiritual with a sophistication of the classical European style.

Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) received acclaim during her lifetime as composer, pianist and teacher. Like Florence Price, she began her career at a time when few African-American women could join the musical profession. Born in Chicago, she studied with Price and William Dawson during high school. College studies at Northwestern University were followed by graduate work at Julliard, where she studied with Roy Harris. She was the first black soloist to play with the Chicago Symphony, in Price's Piano Concerto. By the mid-1960s she had become sought after as a teacher; one of her students was Ned Rorem. In 1967 Bonds moved to Los Angeles where she wrote film and theater music.

Bonds' arrangement of the gospel hymn "He's Got the whole world" has been performed countless times around the world – ironic, perhaps, in that it sounds less of a "spiritual" than do Price's

and Johnson's arrangements. It is marked "religioso" and its stately, almost regal character suggests the organ accompaniments to late 19th-century church anthems.

Libby Larsen

Libby Larsen (b. 1950, Wilmington DE) is a prolific composer of over 500 works, including fifteen operas. In 1973 she co-founded with Stephen Paulus the Minneapolis Composers' Forum, and in 1983 she became the first woman to serve as resident composer with a major orchestra (the Minneapolis). Larsen is attracted particularly to writing for the voice, and conveys a keen sensitivity to the poetry of her texts.

Larsen's Margaret Songs (1998) comprise three songs of Margaret Elliot, a character in her chamber opera Eric Hermanson's Soul, based on a short story by Willa Cather. Cather achieved recognition for her novels of frontier life on the Nebraska plains, including O Pioneers and My Ántonia. Cather also decried the materialism of contemporary culture. Both of these themes inform the Margaret Songs.

Cather's story about Eric Hermanson portrays a young Norwegian in a small Nebraska town that relinquishes his free-spirited lifestyle as lover and fiddle player to the pressures of the church. When Margaret returns to the town, having lived in New York City for some years, she sings to Eric and reawakens his passion for music and for love. Against the church's strictures, the two attend a dance and then leave together for the evening.

In the first song "Bright Rails," the piano accompaniment evokes the wheels of the train, as Margaret sings of going home. The humming of the rails brings comfort in her time of transition; in a larger sense, this trip marks the beginning of Margaret's personal journey of self-discovery.

"So Little There" is Margaret's summation of life in New York, with its "calendar of manners" and "so many small things" of parties and fashion and gossip. Returning home to the plains has given her a new perspective. (This dichotomy of city/country is a common theme in American popular song from the mid-19th century on.) In Larsen's setting, the melodic lines referring to the city employ small intervals, while the more expansive lines refer to the town on the prairie, the "edge of the world."

In "Beneath the Hawthorne Tree," a shimmering piano accompaniment underscores Margaret's recounting the night she spent with Eric, when through love she experiences her "one great moment." The birds, tree, rose and stars have been witness to her rapture, through which she experiences a quasi-mystical absorption of self into Nature.

Richard Hageman

Born in the Netherlands, **Richard Hageman** (1881-1966) was a child prodigy, who became a concert pianist by age 6. As an adult he traveled to the U.S. as a professional accompanist and became an American citizen in 1925. From 1932 to 1936 he directed the Curtis Institute of Music, at the same time conducting the Metropolitan Opera, Chicago Civic Opera and Ravina Park Opera. He also worked in Hollywood composing film scores, winning an Academy Award for John Ford's Stagecoach (1939). While his instrumental compositions are rarely heard today, many of his art songs are highly regarded. These tend to be through-composed, wherein each musical section responds in a specific way to the text. His late Romantic style is chromatic and richly textured.

"Christ Went Up into the Hills" (1924) employs a Katherine Adams poem that involves a city/country dichotomy, as Christ retreats to the hills, seeking refuge from "the city's dust and stone" in order to pray. "Music I Heard from You" (1938) is based on a poem by Conrad Aiken, born in Savannah and the first Georgia author to win the Pulitzer Prize. While this song concerns the loss of love, it remains positive in the midst of sadness, drawing upon the sustaining power of memory. In "Charity" (1921) Hageman set a poem by Emily Dickinson, providing a constantly arpeggiated accompaniment which belies the relative simplicity of the text and melodic line.

"At the Well" (1919) sets a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, poet, novelist and playwright who was the voice of India's spiritual heritage in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This poem was published in Tagore's The Gardiner, an anthology of love poems set against the backdrop of the Bengali countryside. The community well, serving as the center of town life and consequently of the villagers' courtship, is a motif common to European folksongs, not to mention the Bible (e.g., Rebekah in the Old Testament). Here the boy's voyeurism is made out to be playful, the women with their knowing smiles remaining in control.

Lori Latiman

Lori Laitman (b. 1955, Long Beach NY) graduated from Yale's School of Music with a performance degree in flute. While at Yale she started composing for film and theater. Her first song premiered in a New York recital in 1991, and since then she has concentrated on music involving the voice. For Laitman the words are paramount in her compositional process: she composes the vocal line first, emphasizing what she considered to be most important in every line, then fleshes out the accompaniment once the vocal line is complete.

"Beyond All Price" is an aria from her opera The Scarlet Letter (2016), with a libretto by David Mason based on Hawthorne's novel. Hawthorne's Hester Prynne is shunned by her Puritan community for bearing an illegitimate child. Hester steadfastly protects her lover by not revealing his name, and devotes herself to nurturing her daughter Pearl. Though Hawthorne's story is set in colonial Boston, its themes are timeless: the conflict between one's own sense of morality and that of the community, and the limits imposed on individual freedom by a judgmental society.

Laitman casts this song as a lullaby. The rocking motion in the accompaniment is in triple meter, with interpolations of duple meter perhaps suggesting the anxious or precarious situation of Hester. By the song's end, the music has shifted its tonal center from E-flat to F, as Hester reiterates "nothing will harm you, my Pearl."

Elinor Remick Warren

Elinor Remick Warren (1900-1991) was born in Los Angeles, and while still in high school she published her first song. She began her professional career as a touring accompanist. In the early 1940s she retired from performing and turned to composition. Such notable singers as Nelson Eddy, Jeanette MacDonald, Kirsten Flagstad and Eleanor Steber popularized her songs. Her orchestral compositions also found favor; during the decade of the 1970s, Warren was one of the most performed women composers of orchestral music. Her theme for the Hollywood Bowl (1959) was played for twenty years on the theater's carillon before every concert.

Her song "Snow Towards Evening" (1937) employs a text by Melville Crane, a poet and lawyer who was awarded Lifetime Achievement by the Poetry Society of America. Warren anchors the shifting chromatic harmonies of the snowfall with pedal tones, and the "bitter and chill" day transforms into "soft and still" evening.

"Heather" (1942) sets a poem by Marguerite Wilson, born in Canada and who lived most of her life in the U.S. Here the singer compares the rolling tides of the purple ocean at daybreak to the heather of the Scottish Highlands, the "land of her kinsmen" which all her life she has longed to see. Though her soul may be in anguish "like the wind-stricken bird troubling the deep with her cries," she finds joy and strength in contemplation of the ocean, as suggested by the exuberant piano accompaniment and the sustained vocal climax on high G. The belief that ecstasy and elevation of the soul may be attained through a deep connection with Nature derives from German and English Romanticism, which then filtered into American Transcendentalism. A similar poetic theme underlies Larsen's song "Under the Hawthorne Tree."

The words for "God Be in My Heart" (1950) are by an anonymous 16th-century writer. Though the text contains only five phrases, it expresses deeply felt emotion and builds to a fervent conclusion. The singer is asking God to inform his sensory interpretation of the world. However, near the song's end, dissonance in the accompaniment and vocal "oh"s in place of words intensify the singer's request; it now becomes an urgent incantation, a plea for God's help to transcend the senses in order to attain spiritual illumination.

Appalachian music

Appalachian music comes primarily from the mountainous region of the southeastern U.S. It derives from various Anglo-Celtic influences (ballads and fiddle tunes of England, Ireland and Scotland), and later from African-American blues.

One of the earliest collectors of Appalachian ballads was the Kentucky native **John Jacob Niles** (1892-1980). In the 1920s Niles began publishing his transcriptions of traditional songs from oral sources in southern Appalachia. His ballad collections also included songs that he himself composed, often incorporating fragments of texts and/or melodies that he heard during his travels. Well-known songs of his such as "I Wonder As I Wander" and "Black is the Color of My True Love's Hair" are frequently mistaken for traditional material, so well did Niles adapt the folk style to suit his personal invention.

Niles wrote that in the summer of 1933 he heard a sad love song near Murphy NC. Soon thereafter he took two lines of its text as the basis for "The Lass from the Low Countree" and wrote a tune for it that he could sing with a dulcimer accompaniment. Niles performed this song with dulcimer for President Roosevelt at the White House in 1934. This version with dulcimer must have sounded a far cry from the full chordal accompaniment of the piano version he published! Here, the repeating chords in the low register of the piano suggest the tolling bells of fate.

Typical of traditional ballads, the text of "The Lass" portrays unrequited love and its tragic consequences. It reveals its Celtic origin in its use of words such as "lord," "lass" and "mead." It also reflects the theme, frequent in 19th-century American popular song, of associating death with sleep in the midst of Nature, which for the living mitigated the harshness of death.

"Come All You Fair and Tender Maidens" is a Kentucky folksong arranged by **Celius Dougherty** (1902-1986), who was an accompanist to many great singers of the 1930s and 40s, a songwriter of over 200 songs, and a member of a two-piano duo who premiered works by important contemporary composers such as Hindemith, Stravinsky, Berg and Schoenberg. Like the previous two songs, "Come All" is a meditation on lost love, this time also conveying a strong admonitory tone.

"Once I Had a Sweetheart" is an Appalachian folksong arranged by **Richard Walters** (b. 1982, Oxford England). Little story is provided; what is central to the song is the expression of lost love. The accompaniment uses pedal points and strummed chords to imitate a guitar.

Theater

That love may be deceiving is also a central theme of "Vanilla Ice Cream," a song from the musical She Loves Me, with lyrics by Sheldon Harnick and music by **Jerry Bock** (1928-2010), collaborators on Fiddler on the Roof. She Loves Me is one of four adaptations of the play Perfumerie by Hungarian playwright Miklos Laszlo. First came the James Stewart-Margaret Sullivan film The Shop Around the Corner (1940). Then a musical version was made in 1949 for Judy Garland and Van Johnson, titled In the Good Old Summertime. She Loves Me premiered on Broadway in 1963. In 1998 the play was molded into the Tom Hanks-Meg Ryan feature You've Got Mail.

The plot of She Loves Me revolves around Budapest shop employees George and Amalia, who are at odds with each other at work but who are mutually unaware that each is the other's secret pen pal, having met through lonely hearts ads. In "Vanilla Ice Cream," George has visited Amalia in her apartment after she had called in sick that day, surprising her with ice cream. After George leaves, Amalia begins to write a letter to her "dear friend." The music switches between the key of G for the more prosaic, descriptive passages of the letter, and the key of E for her more personal reflections about George's visit.

--- Dr. Kevin Kelly