Emily Dickinson may not have died with her poems “still in her,” (as the saying goes) but she did die with them locked in a box, 1,800 of them, the vast majority unkown to the world until her death. They were written in notebooks and on cards, scribbled on torn pieces of paper and on envelopes with their glue seams pressed open. Her scrawl and scrutable observations came together on flimsy pieces of throwaway paper, which she organized in her later years, and then locked away. 

In due course the poems would become known – and eventually enter the public domain – making her at this point the second most frequently set poet in the English language, with 700 musical settings and counting... just behind Shakespeare.

It’s all I have to bring today –
This, and my heart beside –
This, and my heart, and all the fields –
And all the meadows wide –
Be sure you count – should I forget
Some one the sum could tell –
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell.

Setting by Ernst Bacon

Wild Nights – Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!

Futile – the Winds –
To a Heart in port –
Done with the Compass –
Done with the Chart!

Rowing in Eden –
Ah, the Sea!
Might I but moor – Tonight –
In Thee!

- Setting by Daron Hagen

Elizabeth Bishop (1911 – 1979) was known as a keen observer of everyday life and detail. She was raised by both sets of grandparents and her formal education was spotty at best. Bishop studied music and considered training as a composer, but abandoned this in favor of writing. She was fortunate enough as to have been left an inheritance which enabled her to live as a poet and writer without financial worry. Bishop was made Poet Laureate of the United States (1949 -50) and was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (1956). In 1951, Bryn Mawr College awarded her a traveling fellowship, which took her to Brazil – where she stayed for 15 years. Bishop wrote throughout the blossoming of the feminist movement, but staunchly distanced herself from it. Refusing to have any of her works published in all-female poet anthologies, she wanted to be recognized simply as a poet, and not on a basis of her gender or sexual orientation. For this reason, she probably would have bristled at her inclusion on this concert... our apologies to her memory.

Manners

My grandfather said to me as we sat on the wagon seat,
"Be sure to remember to always speak to everyone you meet."

We met a stranger on foot.
My grandfather’s whip tapped his hat.
"Good day, sir. Good day. A fine day."
And I said it and bowed where I sat.
Then we overtook a boy we knew with his big pet crow on his shoulder. "Always offer everyone a ride; don't forget that when you get older," my grandfather said. So Willy climbed up with us, but the crow gave a "Caw!" and flew off. I was worried. How would he know where to go? But he flew a little way at a time from fence post to fence post, ahead; and when Willy whistled he answered. "A fine bird," my grandfather said, "and he's well brought up. See, he answers nicely when he's spoken to. Man or beast, that's good manners. Be sure that you both always do." When automobiles went by, the dust hid the people's faces, but we shouted "Good day! Good day! Fine day!" at the top of our voices. When we came to Hustler Hill, he said that the mare was tired, so we all got down and walked, as our good manners required.

- Setting by Lee Hoiby, from Three Ages of Woman, Poems of Elizabeth Bishop

Composer Florence B. Price is considered the first African-American female composer to gain national recognition. Educated at the New England Conservatory, she began her professional musical life as an organist, pianist, arranger and composer. Her Symphony in E minor was premiered by the Chicago Symphony in 1933. Price wrote over 100 songs, setting the works of numerous poets, known and unknown. Sadly, Mary Folwell Holsington falls into the unknown category. There are no references to her existence save this poem set to music by Price.

**Travels End** by Mary Folwell Holsington (Dates unknown)

Oh bed in my mother's house with sheets as white as May With blankets wove of carded wool and scented with new-mown hay With the poke of the feathered down from her snow-white plumy geese Oh, bed of mine in my mother's house, With sleep that was dreamy peace, Oh, far have I walked forlorn Oh, bed that my mother made I would that your sheet might be my shroud And I in earth be laid.

Setting by: Florence B. Price

This, from Charles Ives' Memos: "Some say, why choose local authors for a reason for music? – people will say you are provincial. Why the local (which is not national, and not universal and not cosmic?), I say "Oh Hell!" to this label monger! If a man is born in a sewer he smells it, and of it – but he may be nearer a spiritual fragrance than the mayor.”

Ives chose to set this text by Anne Timoney Collins that appeared in The New York Sun on June 7, 1921. This lesser known poet had a long life, but brief obituary:

"Anne Timoney Collins, 94, a playwright, poet and prose writer and a Danville native, died Thursday in Miami, Fla. During the 1920's two of her plays, “Bottled in Bond” and “Bald Mountain,” were produced in New York City. She had also been a reporter for the old New York World and a contributor to the New Yorker, the Catholic Digest and the New Orleans Item. Survivors include a sister, Alice F. Timoney of Miami, and a brother, the Rt. Rev. Francis J. Timoney of Nazareth, Ky.”

Collins wrote several published portraits of her father, this one, The Greatest Man, from a boy's perspective.
The Greatest Man by Anne Collins (1885 - 1979)

My teacher said us boys should write about some great man, so I thought last night 'n thought about heroes and men that had done great things, 'n then I got to thinkin' 'bout my pa; he ain't a hero 'r anything but pshaw! Say! He can ride the wildest hoss 'n find minners near the moss down by the creek; 'n he can swim 'n fish, we ketched five new lights, me 'n him! Dad's some hunter too - oh, my! Miss Molly Cottontail sure does fly when he tromps through the fields 'n brush! (Dad won't kill a lark 'r thrush.) Once when I was sick 'n though his hands were rough he rubbed the pain right out. "That's the stuff!" he said when I winked back the tears. He never cried but once 'n that was when my mother died. There're lots o' great men: George Washinton 'n Lee, but Dad's got 'em all beat holler, seems to me! - Setting by Charles Ives

If you were coming in the Fall, by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

I'd brush the Summer by
With half a smile, and half a spurn,
As Housewives do, a Fly.
If I could see you in a year,
I'd wind the months in balls –
And put them each in separate Drawers,
For fear the numbers fuse –
If only Centuries, delayed,
I'd count them on my Hand,
Subtracting, till my fingers dropped
Into Van Dieman's Land.

If certain, when this life was out –
That yours and mine, should be
I'd toss it yonder, like a Rind,
And take Eternity –
But, now, uncertain of the length
Of this, that is between,
It goads me, like the Goblin Bee –
That will not state – its sting.
- Setting by Daron Hagen

Edith Wharton was a poet as well as a novelist. She had the distinction of being the first woman to earn the Pulitzer Prize for literature (for The Age of Innocence.) Wharton came from a privileged New York aristocratic background... the saying "Keeping up with the Joneses" is said to have come from her father's family. Privilege did not keep her from her share of misfortune, however, much of it incurred when she met and married Philadelphia gentleman, Edmond Wharton.

"Patience" was published in The Atlantic Monthly in 1880, making her a published poet at age 18.

Patience by Edith Wharton (1862 – 1937)

PATIENCE and I have traveled hand in hand
So many days that I have grown to trace
The lines of sad, sweet beauty in her face,
And all its veiled depths to understand.

Not beautiful is she to eyes profane;
Silent and unrevealed her holy charms;
But, like a mother's, her serene, strong arms
Uphold my footsteps on the path of pain.

I long to cry, -- her soft voice whispers, 'Nay!'
I seek to fly, but she restrains my feet;
In wisdom stern, yet in compassion sweet,
She guides my helpless wanderings, day by day.

O my Beloved, life's golden visions fade,
And one by one life's phantom joys depart;
They leave a sudden darkness in the heart,
And patience fills their empty place instead.
- Setting by Benjamin C.S. Boyle
In an interview about “Fury”, the song that opened the Aids Quilt Songbook in 1993, Poet Susan Snively wrote, “This poem is not 'about' a 'problem': it is a response to, first, the imminent mortality of my friend Will Parker, and second, to the AIDS epidemic as it touched on particular people I either knew or imagined. ... I neither see a solution to the problem, except for a possible cure, nor do I think that lyrics to a song can solve anything. That doesn't mean that songs and poems should not be written--the world would be a poorer, darker place without them.”

Snively has taught at Smith College, Mount Holyoke College, and Amherst College. Having since retired from Amherst, she now works as a guide at the Emily Dickinson Museum and leads poetry sessions on Dickinson.

Fury (From the Aids Quilt Songbook)      by Susan Snively (1945 - )

I have a poisoned hand,
I have a bitter voice.
I look death in the face.
I have no choice.

And when death looks on me,
its hollow eye and frown
makes light leap in my eye
to stare him down.

Then I may reach and touch
so many faces, all
with eyes made bright with grief.
We beat the wall,

engrave our anger there,
the fury of many fists.
No longer secret war
cries out. Resist.
Before it is too late,
before the privileged men
find reasons to deny
what we have been.

open your minds and see,
open your souls and know
the message that our eyes
can't help but show:

these are your eyes, unveiled,
these are your quickening years,
unransomed by your pain,
unbought be tears.

Setting by Donald Wheelock

Throughout her life, poet Gwendolyn Brooks held up the inner city poor in her poetry. She had a portfolio of published poems by the age of 16. When her first critically acclaimed book of poetry was published by Harper and Row, she received a Guggenheim Fellowship and went on to become the first African American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry (1950).

In 1962 she was asked by President Kennedy to read at the Library of Congress Poetry Festival. Brooks taught at Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Elmhurst College and Columbia University.
Infirm

by Gwendolyn Brooks (1917 – 2000)

Everbody here
is infirm.
Everybody here is infirm.
Oh. Mend me. Mend me. Lord.
Today I
say to them
say to them
say to them, Lord:
look! I am beautiful, beautiful with
my wing that is wounded
my eye that is bonded
or my ear not funded
or my walk all a-wobble.
I'm enough to be beautiful.
You are
beautiful too.

- Setting by Michael Djupstrom

Daron Hagen wrote: If fate tears me away from my first and second loves (composing and conducting my own theater music),
I would try to write prose. As a passionate lover of the written word, I have the amateur's enthusiasm for writing ...
I would enjoy myself for a while. But, as a career? No. Words are in a way too specific; I would always crave music's ability
to discuss the all-too-personal in an abstract and curiously universal fashion.

Of all the Souls that stand create

by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

I have elected – One –
When Sense from Spirit – files away –
And Subterfuge – is done –
When that which is – and that which was –
Apart – intrinsic – stand –
And this brief Drama in the flesh –
Is shifted – like a Sand –
When Figures show their royal Front –
And Mists – are carved away,
Behold the Atom – I preferred –
To all the lists of Clay!

- Setting by Daron Hagen

I've seen a Dying Eye

by Emily Dickinson

Run round and round a Room –
In search of Something – as it seemed –
Then Cloudier become –
And then – obscure with Fog –
And then – be soldered down
Without disclosing what it be
'Twere blessed to have seen –

- Setting by Daron Hagen
Program Note from Maurice Wright: In the summer of 2012 I visited the West Virginia Archives and History Library in search of first person accounts of the civil unrest in the coalfields that took place in the early part of the 20th century. Before traveling to the archives, I searched its online catalogue for poems and plays dating to that time, and was intrigued by this entry:

Poems, Virginia Robinson?, ca. 1930s.
Content: Poems brought by young Negro girl into WPA office.
Donor: u.d. [unknown donor]

If she was a “young girl,” she was somewhere between ages 10 and 20 in 1930, which puts her date of birth at 1910-1920. Given this date, she might have been the daughter of a mine family. Many black laborers were drawn to southern West Virginia during the coal boom that accompanied World War I, but that prosperity had waned by the time of the Great Depression. So, there is some possibility that she was a prodigiously bright young black woman who heard that the WPA was paying artists for their work. We can assume she lived somewhere in West Virginia or Virginia, near a WV WPA office, although there were surely multiple WPA offices. I’m not sure her name was Virginia Robinson. She may have been from Robinson, Virginia, for example.

What is certain, however, is the sweep of the poet’s imagination. This poem treats the ideas of love and death, evokes images of snow and the moon, and implores the reader to hold the hands and dreams of the poet, which I have tried to do with my setting.

Hold my hands, lover  by Virginia Robinson  (Dates unknown)

Hold my hands, lover,
Hold them tightly, never let them go
For in dark death, lover,
I shall remember you held them so.

Here are my dreams, lover,
Clasp them warmly, show them to the moon
And in death I shall rest, lover,
Knowing you keep their timid tune.

Here are my hands, lover,
Hold them tightly, never let them go
For in dark death a heart, lover,
Is cold as snow.  -Setting by Maurice Wright

INTERMISSION

Copland stated, “These twelve songs of Emily Dickinson were composed at Sneden’s landing, New York, from March 1949 to March 1950. They are the first works the composer has written for solo voice and piano since 1928. The poems treat a subject matter particularly close to Miss Dickinson: nature, death, life, eternity…”

Copland said he sought to “create a musical counterpart for the unique personality of the poet.”

Dear March – Come in –  by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

How glad I am —
I hoped for you before —
Put down your Hat —
You must have walked —
How out of Breath you are —
Dear March, Come right up the stairs with me —
I have so much to tell —
I got your Letter, and the Birds —
The Maples never knew that you were coming — till I called
I declare — how Red their Faces grew —
But March, forgive me — and
All those Hills you left for me to Hue —
There was no Purple suitable —
You took it all with you —

Who knocks? That April.
Lock the Door —
I will not be pursued —
He stayed away a Year to call
When I am occupied —
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come

That Blame is just as dear as Praise
And Praise as mere as Blame —And Praise as mere as Blame

-Setting by Aaron Copland
Contemporary of Emily Dickinson, poet Emma Lazarus could not have had more of a different sort of life. She was born in New York City, traveled widely and shortly after her death, had her words (from “The New Colossus”) immortalized on the Statue of Liberty. Lazarus’ writings attracted the attention of Ralph Waldo Emerson with whom she became friends and the two corresponded until his death. This song hails from the musical “Miss Liberty” with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin.

“Give me your tired, your poor
by Emma Lazarus (1849 – 1887)

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

“Our Vision for the Future” is from Amanda Nadelberg’s second book of poems, Bright Brave Phenomena, published in 2012. (You should buy it.) In a recent interview she talked a bit about constructing her poems, “I had been collecting these little lines and scraps in a shoebox. And at a certain point I realized it was time to try to put some of them together, so the act of writing a poem became almost an editing in and of itself, a sewing together of disparate pieces over a connected period of time that all somehow felt more connected because of a floating feeling, an emotional floating... So, really the poems are disparate pieces that were sewed back into chronological or emotional line-neighbors.”

Our Vision for the Future by Amanda Nadelberg

We come here to understand especially little things.

France is grand today. 1986 was just like this: giving our grapefruits little sun tans.

These days young people don’t give a damn. Yarrow?

What does that even mean? Family commitments?

Like a tub? I’m a metropolitan woman! A woman who buys a lamp because it suits her.

Maybe I’m ordinary, huffed against a fence post.

I’d like to be both of us at the same time. You looking here at you. - Setting by Douglas Cuomo

In January, 2014, San Diego arts writer, critic and poet Charlene Baldridge wrote in her blog about the turn of events of the last decade when Jake Heggie began setting her poems. “It was quite the thing ten years ago, at 70, to have a famous composer set my poems. Now it’s the icing on the cake of old age. This morning, I ran across an account of Mother’s Day 2004. It mentioned Laura’s excitement (the poet’s daughter) over hearing the song “Winter Roses” for the first time, sitting next to me, holding my hand and looking very proud indeed... I think of Laura’s pride and enthusiasm and realize that since my mother no other has been so supportive and understanding of who I am and what I’m trying to do. Laura fully got it. I’m certain that at every performance, no matter what and no matter where, she is next to me, holding my hand and looking supremely proud.”

The poet’s daughter, Laura Morefield (also a poet), succumbed to cancer in 2011.

Motherwit by Charlene Baldridge (1934 -)

If I could bring her back, now that I’ve matured
If we could really talk...
Perhaps, I’d be reassured her disapproval was imagined;
The pattern she had in mind was not perfection.
I do not discard

Nor do I hate the what-I’ve-beens.
They are part of me.
Instead I begin reassembling Fragments I found
After I forgave. -Setting by Jake Heggie
Visits to St. Elizabeths by Elizabeth Bishop (1911 – 1979)

This is the house of Bedlam.
This is the man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is the time
of the tragic man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is a wristwatch
telling the time
of the talkative man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is a sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time
of the honored man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is the roadstead all of board
reached by the sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time
of the old, brave man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
These are the years and the walls of the ward,
the winds and clouds of the sea of board
sailed by the sailor
wearing the watch
that tells the time of the cranky man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances weeping down the ward
over the creaking sea of board
beyond the sailor winding his watch
that tells the time of the cruel man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a world of books gone flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances weeping down the ward
over the creaking sea of board
of the batty sailor
that winds his watch that tells the time
of the busy man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
This is a boy that pats the floor
to see if the world is there, is flat,
for the widowed Jew in the newspaper hat,
that dances weeping down the ward
waltzing the length of a weaving board
by the silent sailor that hears his watch
that ticks the time
of the tedious man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.
These are the years and the walls and the door
that shut on a boy that pats the floor
to feel if the world is there and flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances joyfully down the ward
into the parting seas of board
past the staring sailor
that shakes his watch
that tells the time
of the poet, the man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

This is a soldier home from the war.
These are the years and the walls and the door
that shut on a boy that pats the floor
to see if the world is round or flat.
This is a Jew in a newspaper hat
that dances carefully down the ward,
walking the plank of a coffin board
with the crazy sailor
that show his watch
that tells the time of the wretched man
that lies in the house of Bedlam.

“You see, I am a poet, and not quite right in the head, darling. It's only that.” said lyric poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay.

After graduating from Vassar College, Millay lived in Greenwich Village where she was “very, very poor and very, very merry.”

Recuerdo (Its title is Spanish for “remembrance.”) was written during this time, in 1920, and was published in A Few Figs from Thistles, her second collection of Poetry. With this publication Millay became a national sensation. Elizabeth Atkins, her critical biographer put it this way, “To say it became popular conveys but a faint idea of the truth. Edna St. Vincent Millay became, in effect, the unrivaled embodiment of sex appeal, the It-girl of the hour, the Miss America of 1920. It seemed there was hardly a literate young person in all the English-speaking world who was not soon repeating [her verses].” She won the Pulitzer for Poetry in 1923 for this collection.
Recuerdo by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892 – 1950)

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a stable—
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across a table,
We lay on a hill-top underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry—
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came cold,
And the sun rose dripping, a bucketful of gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on the ferry.
We hailed, “Good morrow, mother!” to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which neither of us read;
And she wept, “God bless you!” for the apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our subway fares.

- Setting by John Musto, from the song cycle Recuerdo (1987).

Susan Scott Thompson wrote poetry throughout her life; one that included other careers. She was teacher of English literature, poetry and composition, a social worker and counselor. “Waltzing the Spheres,” was originally inspired by trying to learn to waltz in a production of Strauss’ Die Fledermaus. This poem consoled the nation when after the 9-11 disaster PSB requested permission for “Waltzing the Spheres,” to be recited on Bill Moyers’s program on September 12. She wrote: “Peter Francis James read “Waltzing the Spheres,” while photographs of the last two days appeared on the screen – a man carrying a bleeding woman, a fireman sitting alone, head in hands, doctors surrounding a wounded man, exhausted men raising the United States flag, and finally, candles on a dark street, lighting the faces of people gathered there. All day I had been trying to avoid images, but these augmented my words in ways I could not have imagined alone, and I could hardly breathe with this astonishment. My poem had taken on its own life, as all our children do once we have borne them in our private, almost irrelevant bearing.”

Waltzing the Spheres by Susan Scott Thompson (1946-2007)

We pulled each other closer in the turn
around a center that we could not see -
This holding on was what I had to learn.

The sun can hold the planets, earth the moon,
but we had to create our gravity
by always pulling closer in the turn.

Each revolution caused my head to whirl
so dizzily I wanted to break free,
but holding on was what I had to learn.

I fixed my eyes on something out there firm,
and then our orbit steadied so that we
could pull each other closer in the turn.

The joy that circles with us round the curve
is joy that passes surely as a peace,
and holding on is what we have to learn.

And if our feet should briefly leave the earth,
no matter, earth was made for us to leave,
and arms for pulling closer in the turn -
This holding on is what we have to learn.

- Setting by James Primosch
Poet Alice Fulton puts it this way: “Poetry is neither future driven nor teleological in spirit. The pleasure exists in the presence and texture of each line, as each line is experienced. Which is to say: fiction is about what happens next; poetry is about what happens now.” The celebrated poet, Fulton, was asked by composer William Bolcom to suggest a selection of poetry of American women poets for a cycle that Marilyn Horne had commissioned. Bolcom included one of Fulton’s.

How to Swing Those Obbligatos Around  by Alice Fulton (1952 - )

He had shag hair & a boutique.
In the bar he told me I had too much class
to be a telephone operator & I told him
he should have been thirty in 1940:
a gangster with paten leather shoes
to shine under girl's skirts & a mother
who called him sonny. He should have
crashed a club where they catered
to the smart set, disposing of
the bouncer with
You spent three months in
in a plaster cast the last time
you tangled with me & I should have been
the singer in tight champagne
skin waiting for him to growl
I don’t know how to begin
this beguine but you certainly know how to
swing those obbligatos around & we
would fox-trot till a guy
he knew from Sing Sing cut in.
& he said he loved old flicks
I should come up to his place & see
the art deco ashtrays on his shag rug
that I shouldn’t waste myself
at Bell tel but marry him
& take his business calls &
I said How many years do you get
if they give you life - Setting by William Bolcom, from "I Will Breathe a Mountain" A Song Cycle from American Women Poets

From the song cycle “The Perfected Life” composer, Lori Laitman states “I have often turned to Emily Dickinson when composing songs as gifts, and the songs in this cycle are all birthday gifts. “The Perfected Life” was a 90th birthday gift for my dear father.”

The Perfected Life  by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)

The Props assist the House
Until the House is built
And then the Props withdraw
And adequate, erect,
The House support itself
And cease to recollect
The Auger and the Carpenter –
Just such a retrospect
Hath the perfected Life –
A past of Plank and Nail
And slowness – then the Scaffolds drop
Affirming it a Soul. -Setting by Lori Laitman
Logan Skelton is a concert pianist, teacher and composer who has concertized widely in the United States, Europe and Asia. He composes song almost exclusively, finding it the most inspiring genre of music. “Hope” is the thing with feathers was inspired by a visit to the composer’s friend, Philip Frohnmayer and his wife Ellen in 2008, when it seemed that Phil would imminently succumb to cancer. From the time the song was composed, Phil, who was also the mentor of Suzanne DuPlantis, went on to live for another five years before passing away in October of 2013.

Today’s performance is dedicated to his daughter, Anne Marie Frohnmayer.

“Hope” is the thing with feathers – by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886)
That perches in the soul –
And sings the tune without the words –
And never stops – at all –
And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –
And sore must be the storm –
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm –
I’ve heard it in the chilliest land –
And on the strangest Sea –
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb – of Me. - Setting by Logan Skelton

Poet Gertrude Stein was as well known for her Salon on 27 rue de Fleurus on the Left Bank in Paris as for her verse.

She was an avid art collector and mentor to artists, writers and poets and throughout her 40 years in Paris.

April Fool Baby by Gertrude Stein (1874 – 1946)
It’s seems to be a note to she the sweet sweetie
But actually it’s April Fool to tender she
My sweetie
She is all me my sweetie
April full of fool which is me for my sweetie
Dear April which made she to be
All to he April
Fool to his sweetie which is she
Tenderly excessively sweetily
My April Fool baby – Setting by Paul Bowles

Dorothy Parker, poet and satirist, sold her first poem to Vanity Fair when she was 21 and over the next decade published over 300 poems in the leading magazines of the day; Vanity Fair, Vogue, The New Yorker, Life, and McCall’s. In spite of being black listed during the McCarthy era, and in spite of her own dismissive attitude about her work, her verse continues to gain new audiences. Upon her death she willed her estate to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. foundation, who passed it on to the NAACP.

Résumé by Dorothy Parker (1893 – 1967)
Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren’t lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live. - Setting by John Musto
Soprano KELLY ANN BIXBY is a native of Philadelphia and is a featured concert and chamber music soloist in the tri-state region. She made her debut at Opera Philadelphia in Ainadamar in February and won the 2014 Eastern Regional Artist Award in the competition held by the National Association of Teachers of Singing. The 2013-2014 season found her at Opera Philadelphia in Golijov’s Ainadamar, returning to Philadelphia's premier art song series, Lyric Fest and performing in Vaughn Williams’ Sea Symphony with the Bucks County Choral Society and Brahms Requiem with the Greater South Jersey Symphony Chorus and Villa Lobos Bachianas Brasilieras with the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra. Committed to the performance of new works, Ms. Bixby can be heard on Opera America’s “New American Songbook” CD, a compendium of commissioned works from current American composers including Pulitzer Prize winning composer Lewis Spratlan. The recording marks the second premiere of Spratlan’s works by Ms. Bixby, her first as a member of the acclaimed contemporary chamber choir, The Crossing, in 2012, with Hesperus vs. Phosphorus. In June 2013 The Crossing won their second ASCAP award for Adventurous Programming in addition to the 2013 Dale Warland Singers Commission Award.

Ms. Bixby has appeared with Opera Philadelphia, Du Page Opera in Glen Ellyn, IL, the Princeton Festival Opera and New Jersey Opera. As a member of Westminster Choir she performed in Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and at the Spoleto Festival USA. She has performed in numerous masterclasses including world-renowned baritone Thomas Hampson, pianist Roger Vignoles, composer Richard Hundley and tenor George Shirley. Ms. Bixby holds degrees in performance and education from the University of Michigan and Westminster Choir College and is on the music faculty at Moorestown Friends School in New Jersey. Ms. Bixby sang as a young artist in the CoOPERAtive Program in 2009.

JEFFREY HALILI has the keen performing instincts that any good character tenor needs. This season, Mr. Halili appeared as Spolletta in Puccini’s Tosca in his house debut with Austin Lyric Opera, appeared at the Virginia Opera as Bardolfo and performed his first Guillard in the Academy of Vocal Arts production of Manon. He recently performed Nick in La Fanciulla del West with Nashville Opera and proceeding this, returned to New York City Opera where he performed Gaston in their production of La Traviata. Recent notable appearances have included performances at Avery Fisher Hall as Kaspar in Amahl and the Night Visitors with the Little Orchestra Society for their Holiday performances, AVO's production of Les Contes d’Hoffmann as the Four Grotesques, Goro with Virginia Opera and Don Basilio/Don Curzio (Le Nozze di Figaro) with the San Antonio Opera. Other highlights include L’Incredibile/’L Abate (Andrea Chenier) for Nashville Opera, Borsa with San Antonio Opera, Goro with New York City Opera, a concert with the Philly Pops, Goro for San Antonio Opera, Pedrillo with both Minnesota Opera and Hawaii Opera Theater, Goro in a critically acclaimed production of Florida Grand Opera's Madama Butterfly as well as New York City Opera's Magic Flute at the River to River Festival. Other career highlights include debuts with New York City Opera, Michigan Opera Theater, New Orleans Opera, Virginia Opera and Florida Grand Opera in works such as Turandot, Lucia di Lammermoor, Agrippina, La Traviata and La Fanciulla del West. Upcoming performances include Madama Butterfly with both Hawaii Opera Theater and Anchorage Opera and Salome with Virginia Opera.

Baritone RANDALL SCARLATA enjoys a lively career encompassing opera, recital, chamber music and works for voice and orchestra. He has appeared on concert stages throughout Europe, North America, South America, the Near East and the Far East. Randall has been a soloist with the Philadelphia and Minnesota Orchestras, and with the Pittsburgh, San Francisco, American, Ulster, Tonkünstler, National and BBC Symphonies, as well as the early music groups Wiener Akademie Orchester, Philharmonia Baroque, and Musica Angelica, among others. Many of the world’s great music festivals have sought him out, including the Ravinia, Marlboro, Edinburgh, Vienna, Menlo, Salzburg, Aspen and Spoleto (Italy) festivals. Known for his versatility and consummate musicianship, Mr. Scarlata's repertoire spans four centuries and fifteen languages. A sought-after interpreter of new music, he has given world premieres of works by George Crumb, Paul Moravec, Richard Danielpour, Ned Rorem, Lori Laitman, Thea Musgrave, Samuel Adler, Daron Hagen, Wolfram Wagner and Christopher Theofanidis. He is equally comfortable in Bach’s Passions, Mozart operas, Schubert song cycles, Mahler orchestral works, and American popular song. He regularly performs the
Schubert song cycles with pianist Jeremy Denk throughout the United States, and has recently toured with Jonathan Biss and Inon Barnatan for The Schubert Project. In addition, Mr. Scarlata has recorded for the Chandos, Naxos, CRI, Gasparo, Arabesque and Albany labels. Randall Scarlata’s awards include First Prize at the 1999 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, First Prize at the 1997 Das Schubert Lied International Competition in Vienna, First Prize at the 1997 Joy in Singing Competition in New York, and the 1998 Alice Tully Arts Debut Recital Award. Mr. Scarlata received a Fulbright Grant to study at the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna, and spent several summers studying with the great French baritone, Gérard Souzay. Mr. Scarlata serves on the faculty of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at West Chester University and also SUNY Stony Brook.

ELIZABETH SHAMMASH, a “mezzo voice that makes one sit up and take notice,” (The Boston Globe) has opera credits that range from Monteverdi’s L’Incoronazione di Poppea to contemporary scores. She has taken on major roles with companies including New York City Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Opera Theatre of St. Louis, Glimmerglass Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Berkshire Opera, Palm Beach Opera, Forth Worth Opera, Sarasota Opera, Israel Vocal Arts Institute in Tel Aviv (Isabella in Rossini’s L'Italiana in Algheri, Elizabeth Proctor in Ward's The Crucible), and the Beijing Music Festival. She has appeared with orchestras including the China National Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Mostly Mozart Festival, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, Berlin Radio Symphony, Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields, Seattle, Dallas, Toledo, Hartford and Memphis Symphonies, Minnesota Orchestra, Pacific Symphony, National Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke's, Boston Baroque, Early Music Vancouver, Portland (OR) Baroque and Apollo's Fire, Cleveland’s Baroque Orchestra. Ms. Shammash is in great demand as a recitalist for her nuanced interpretations and linguistic versatility in the song repertoire. Highlights have included performances at Tanglewood, Marlboro, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, the Cape and Islands Chamber Music Festival, and Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series. Ms. Shammash has recorded extensively for the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music on the Naxos label, including Yiddish stage songs of Abraham Ellstein and Joseph Rumshinsky, Yiddish art songs of Lazar Weiner and David Stock's A Little Miracle for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra. She also recorded Bernstein’s Trouble in Tahiti on the Newport Classic label. Ms. Shammash holds a Master’s degree in Music and Voice Performance from Manhattan School of Music, an artist diploma from Boston University's Opera Institute and a B.A. in Italian Studies from Brown University. She has practiced yoga for the last 20 years and holds teacher certification from Om Yoga Center, NYC. She received investiture as Hazzan (Cantor) and a Master of Sacred Music and from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in May 2007. She serves as Cantor of Tiferet Bet Israel in Blue Bell, PA and makes her home in Philadelphia with her husband, David Reed.

SUZANNE DUPLANTIS, mezzo soprano and co-founding artistic director of Lyric Fest, is a widely appreciated artist who is featured regularly as soloist throughout the region. Noted for her moving renditions of songs and for her intimate way with an audience, DuPlantis made her New York debut in the St. John Passion of Bach at Alice Tully Hall with Musica Sacra and her Kimmel Center debut in Mahler’s Das Lied von der Erde with Orchestra 2001. Her career in opera has spanned debuts with Arizona Opera, Austin Lyric, New Orleans Opera, Mobile Opera, Eugene Opera, Cincinnati Opera, Knoxville Opera, Chautauqua Opera and Opera Company of Philadelphia in roles from Rossini's heroines Rosina and Isabella, Carmen to Waltraute. In oratorio, chamber music and song, Suzanne has appeared on numerous occasions with Philadelphia's premiere arts organizations including The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, The Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, The Philadelphia Orchestra, Choral Arts Society, Singing City, The Wister Quartet, Mendelssohn Club and The Philadelphia Chamber Ensemble. Upcoming and recent performances include Beethoven’s Mass in C with the French Quarter Festival in New Orleans, The Art of the Serenade with performances in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, with Paul Faustini and Allen Krantz, guitarist, a premiere of Hobbs' Jubilate and Te Deum with The Choristers of Upper Dublin, in Cabaret at the Michener Art Museum and in recital in Spoleto, Italy at Casa Menotti and again in Pittsburgh in the fall for Music in a Great Space at Shadyside Presbyterian Church. Ms. DuPlantis has premiered many new works including Andrea Clearfield's Les Fenêtres and the Women of Valor Suite, Kile Smith's Two Laudate Psalms, Robert Maggio’s Rachel and her Children; Small Hands Relinquish All, Roxanna Panufnik's Love Abide, Logan Skelton’s Dickinson Songs, Allen Krantz’s From On the Road and Tom Lloyd's Ben Unleashed. She has recorded Ancestral Waters of Brian Gaber for mezzo, orchestra and jazz trio. Ms. DuPlantis holds degrees from Loyola University, Eastman School of Music and The Academy of Vocal Arts, and is an active and committed teacher in
Pianist and Co-founding Artistic Director of Lyric Fest, LAURA WARD has been gracing Philadelphia audiences with her powerful, sensitive accompanying since arriving here in 1998. As a distinguished collaborative pianist she is known for both her technical ability and vast knowledge of repertoire and styles. Recent and upcoming engagements include performing in recital with Denyce Graves, and premiering new works for piano, guitar and trombone by Allen Krantz with the New York Philharmonic's Joseph Alessi. Concert engagements have taken her to Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, the Spoleto Festival (Italy) and the Colmar International Music Festival and Saint Denis Festival in France. She has served as a vocal coach at The Academy of Vocal Arts, Westminster Choir College, Temple University, Ravinia Festival Stein's Institute, Washington Opera, University of Maryland, Music Academy of the West and at Cleveland’s Blossom Festival and as the official pianist for the Washington International Competition, the Astral Artists Auditions and for the Marian Anderson Award. Laura is a recording artist and editor of song accompaniments for publisher Hal Leonard having also co-edited: Richard Strauss: 40 Songs, Gabriel Fauré: 50 Songs, and Johannes Brahms: 75 Songs and has recorded over 2000 song accompaniments for Hal Leonard Publishing. These volumes help singers and pianists experience, learn and enjoy the art song repertory and also help introduce a world of art song to many who have had little exposure to it. A native of Texas, Laura received her Bachelor’s from Baylor University, holds a Masters in Piano Accompanying at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and a Doctorate in Accompanying from the University of Michigan as a student of Martin Katz. While at the University of Michigan, Laura was pianist for the Contemporary Directions ensemble and performed with the Ann Arbor Symphony.

Narrator MICHELLE EUGENE is an actress, singer, voice therapist and coach, who is delighted to be adding poetry recitation to her resume. She has performed most recently at The Metropolitan Playhouse in New York and has appeared locally at Cape May Stage, the Wilma, Bristol Riverside Theatre, Act II Playhouse, Montgomery Theatre, Gas & Electric Arts, and other venues. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Vocal Performance from the Catholic University of America, a Master’s degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences from Indiana University, Bloomington, and is certified in Fitzmaurice™ Voice Work, a technique designed to train the acting voice. When she is not performing, Michelle teaches and sees patients in a private practice devoted to voice therapy for injured speakers and singers.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES

BENJAMIN C.S. BOYLE’s compositions include opera, orchestral music, chamber music, and more. Notable performances include the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra's 2009 premiere of Hudson Sinfonia at Riverside Church in New York City. Chicago Lyric Opera, under conductor Donald Nally, premiered his choral work The Holly and the Ivy in the same season. At the piano, he gave the 2008 US premiere of his Sonata-Fantasy with violinist Tim Fain at the Kennedy Center in Washington and Merkin Hall in New York. In 2005 in New York, Bachanalia Orchestra, under Vladimir Lande, premiered the Cantata To One in Paradise, also performed in 2010 by The Crossing Choir and the Philadelphia Virtuoso Orchestra. A first prize winner of the Young Concert Artists International Composition Competition, Dr. Boyle is represented by Young Concert Artists, Inc. His music is published by Rassel Editions. It has been broadcast on NPR, featured on Performance Today, and in New York on WGXR. He studied composition, harmony, counterpoint, and analysis with Dr. Philip Lasser. He was trained in the method of Nadia Boulanger and continues to build on her pedagogic foundation. At age 25, Dr. Boyle was the youngest person ever to receive a PhD in Composition from the University of Pennsylvania, after completing a M.M. from The Peabody Conservatory and a B.M. from the University of South Florida, where he studied piano with Robert Helps. Past composition teachers include Narcis Bonet, David del Tredici, Christopher Theofanidis, Samuel Adler, Lukas Foss, Jay Reise, Hilton Jones, and Nicholas Maw. He has judged several major competitions, including The EAMA Prize and the Peabody Macht Orchestral Composition Competition. Dr. Boyle is the Associate Director of the European American Musical Alliance. He is an Adjunct Professor of Composition at Westminster Choir College and Faculty in Composition, Keyboard Harmony, Counterpoint, and Analysis at the EAMA Summer Program in Paris.
DOUGLAS J. CUOMO has composed highly acclaimed, original music for stage, television, and film. Cuomo's expressive musical language, with arresting juxtapositions of sound and style, is a natural outgrowth of his eclectic development. Born in Tucson, Arizona, raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and Amherst, Massachusetts, Cuomo played the trumpet in grade school and switched to guitar at age 10. While in high school, he studied with jazz greats Max Roach and Archie Shepp at the University of Massachusetts. In his teens, he became a professional guitarist, alternating years of college – studying jazz, world music, and ethnomusicology at Wesleyan University– with years on the road. He completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Miami. After two years of touring, Cuomo returned to New York City and composed scores for downtown theater productions, student films, and television documentaries. He soon developed a notable talent for integrating music, image, and narrative. His numerous film and television credits include the themes for Sex & The City and NOW with Bill Moyers. Significant recent works include Doubt, an opera based on the play and movie with a libretto by John Patrick Shanley; A Winter's Journey, a setting of Wilhelm Müller's text for Schubert's Winterreise; Black Diamond Express Train to Hell, a double concerto for orchestra, cello and sampler premiered by the American Composers Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in 2010, with Maya Beiser and the composer as soloists; Arjuna’s Dilemma, an opera-oratorio based on the Bhagavad Gita produced by Music-Theatre Group and premiered at BAM’s Next Wave festival; Only Breath, commissioned and performed by Maya Beiser, at The International Festival of Arts & Ideas, Ravinia, Carnegie Hall and others (2008). Mr. Cuomo has lectured widely and performs with his band, and has arranged music for pop stars. His compositions are published by Schott Music.

MICHAEL DJUPSTROM (b. 1980) has received first prizes in the international composition competitions of the UK’s Delius Society, the American Viola Society, the Chinese Fine Arts Society, and awards and grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (Charles Ives Fellowship & Scholarship), New Music USA, Meet the Composer, the American Composers Forum, the Académie musicale de Villecroze, and the Sigurd and Jarmila Rislov Foundation. The Music Teachers National Association named him 2005 MTNA-Shepherd Distinguished Composer of the Year. The Philadelphia Orchestra Association, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Tanglewood Music Center, the New York Youth Symphony Chamber Music Program, Music From Angel Fire, the Curtis Institute of Music, the Philadelphia Gay Men’s Chorus, International Opera Theater, the Lyra Society, the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, and the Cavatina Duo commissioned his works. Network for New Music, Dolce Stuno, and Lyric Fest in Philadelphia, Music from Copland House, the DeNiens Project, Dinosaur Annex, Juventas, Sounds New, the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra, the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra, Symphonia in C, Shasta Symphony, and International Opera Theater presented his works. A pianist and founding member of the Phoenix Trio, Djupstrom played national tours, and collaborated with new music ensemble Relache. He recorded for American Public Media’s “Performance Today,” Radio Television Hong Kong’s Radio 4, and the Equilibrium, American Modern, and Meyer Media labels. Currently a member of the Curtis Institute of Music Musical Studies faculty, Djupstrom taught at Settlement Music School, Boston University, University of Michigan, and presented at many universities worldwide. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Bright Sheng, Susan Botti, William Bolcom and Karen Tanaka. Djupstrom studied in Paris with Betsy Jolas. He holds an Artist Diploma from the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studied with Jennifer Higdon and Richard Danielpour.

DARON HAGEN is one of America’s most prominent, prolific, and respected composers. All eight of his major operas are currently in production or revival somewhere in the U.S., Europe, or Asia. His orchestral, chamber, and song catalogues are frequently programmed internationally. Mr. Hagen’s activities include stage direction, conducting; and engagements as a collaborative pianist, artistic director, writer, and librettist. He has collaborated with distinguished musicians such as Leonard Bernstein, JoAnn Falletta, Gary Graffman, Nathan Gunn, Jaime Laredo, David Alan Miller, Sharon Robinson, Gerard Schwarz, Leonard Slatkin, and Robert Spano, among others. His work has been widely commissioned and performed by most of North America’s major musical institutions, and numerous institutions abroad, including the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, National Symphony, Seattle Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Curtis Symphony, Milwaukee Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, the Orchestra of the Swan (UK), Seattle Opera, Opera Theater of Ireland, as well as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Louvre, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (Beijing), and Royal Albert Hall. Mr. Hagen has served frequently as conductor and collaborative
pianist for recordings of his works. His music can be heard on the Albany, Arsis, Bridge, Clarion, GPR, Klavier, Naxos, and New World/CRI labels, among others. In 2012, he was awarded the Guggenheim Fellowship. He has also received the Kennedy Center Friedheim Prize, two Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Fellowships, ASCAP and BMI prizes, and the Seattle Opera Chairman’s Award. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the Curtis Institute of Music and of the Juilliard School, he has taught at Bard College, the Curtis Institute of Music, and the Princeton Atelier, and fulfilled numerous composer-in-residencies around the U.S. He is a Lifetime Member of the Corporation of Yaddo, former President of the Lotte Lehmann Foundation, and a Trustee of the Douglas Moore Fund for American Opera.

JAMES PRIMOSCH’s music can be intensely lyrical, as in Holy the Firm or dazzlingly angular as in Secret Geometry. Works like Piano Quintet reflect his love of jazz, while his work as a church musician informs his sacred compositions. Born in Cleveland in 1956, Primosch studied at Cleveland State University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. His principal teachers include Mario Davidovsky, George Crumb and Richard Wernick. The Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Collage, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the Twentieth Century Consort have performed his works. The ISCM/League of Composers World Music Days in Hong Kong featured his Icons, and Dawn Upshaw included a song by Primosch in her Carnegie Hall debut. The Chicago Symphony, Speculum Musicae, the Cantata Singers, and pianist Lambert Orkis premiered his works. He received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two prizes from the American Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, a Regional Artists Fellowship to the American Academy in Rome, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, the Stoeger Prize of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and a fellowship to the Tanglewood Music Center where he studied with John Harbison. The Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Folger Consort, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Barlow Endowment, and the Network for New Music commissioned his works. In 1994 he served as composer-in-residence at the Marlboro Music Festival. His compositions have appeared on Albany, Azica, Bard, Bridge, CRI, Centaur, and New World labels. An active pianist, he was a prizewinner at the Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition in Rotterdam, and appears on New World, the Smithsonian Collection, Crystal Records, and CRI recordings. Since 1988 he has served on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, and directs the Presser Electronic Music Studio.

Born in 1949 in Front Royal, Virginia, MAUROCE WRIGHT began composing at age 10. He attended Duke University and Columbia University, where he explored music composition, computer science and film. Many outstanding ensembles and soloists, including the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Emerson String Quartet, the American Brass Quintet, the Riverside Symphony, and the Berkshire Music Festival at Tanglewood, have commissioned his works. The American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Fromm Music Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts have recognized and supported his work. Six CD recordings on New World, Innova and CRI include his compositions. Wright has taught at Boston University, Columbia University, and the University of Pennsylvania. He is Laura H. Carnell Professor of Music Composition at Temple University’s Boyer College of Music and Dance, where he co-founded the Interactive Arts and Technology Laboratory and the Presser Center for Creative Music Technology. He recently served as Interim Associate Dean for Graduate Programs, Financial Aid and Technology. Wright’s first collaboration with Director Gene Searchinger introduced him to the craft and technology of film through his electronic score for “Metallic Tales: The Social Life of a Non-Ferrous Metal,” which received a Golden Eagle Award. He incorporated his interest in image into two electronic operas: The Trojan Conflict (1989), and Dr. Franklin, produced in Philadelphia in 1990 as part of the Electrical Matter Festival. Since then he has experimented with visualization of musical sound and with digital animation. The Network for New Music commissioned him to create a work for computer animation and computer sound for their 1996-1997 season in Philadelphia. Wright is currently setting the poetry of the late William F. Van Wert, a Temple colleague whose work Wright first incorporated in The Lyric’s Tale.