

SKALD FESTIVAL OF SONG

VOLUME 1

Thursday, April 10, 2025 // 7 p.m.
Greaves Concert Hall



[JOIN EMAIL LIST](#)



[JOIN FRIENDS OF SOTA](#)



[DIGITAL PROGRAM](#)

RECORDING VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO OF THIS CONCERT
AND DISTRIBUTING RECORDINGS OR STREAMS IN ANY MEDIUM IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

PROGRAM

In a Four-Song Cycle (2024) Jason Richmond (b. 1981)
Text by J. Richmond

- I. *In Clout*
- II. *In Vain*
- III. *In Homage*
- IV. *In Gratitude*

Joy Wallace Burdette, *soprano*
Richard Van Dyke, *piano*
Vera Hsu, *violin*

I. In Clout

*Alive, only holding on by a
thread
A noose too thin to hang my
head
A blade too dull to cut a shred
Skin too thick to make a tread
If I had it all figured out I would
without a doubt
Have chosen the same route
and where it would lead
I'm all in clout*

II. In Vain

*Into the light I cast a shadow on
The break of the night
As I yearn for dawn

Clouds roll in
Hints of grey and rain
A storm too calm and it's all in
vain I long
For the night to come I breathe
Just to say I've won
The darkness has
Cast a shadow on
A day that
Only just begun*

III. In Homage

*To a memory... I wish I would
have kept for eternity.
To a lost love... the only real part
of me that I can think of.
To my last breath... may you take
with it all that I have left.*

IV. In Gratitude

*I'm here to stay
I'll go on living
I'm quick to pray
That God is forgiving
I'm here to face
I'll go about my day
I'm quick to trace
The path that leads the way
In gratitude
I'll give thanks
To a life I get to live*

Emily Dickinson Art Songs Jonathan Carlisle (b. 1991)

- I. *The Distance*
- II. *The Sea*
- III. *The Bereaved*

Jessica Carlisle, *soprano*
Jonathan Carlisle, *piano*

Text by E. Dickinson

I. The Distance

*The distance that the dead have gone
Does not at first appear;
Their coming back seems possible
For many an ardent year.
And then, that we have followed them
We more than half suspect,
So intimate have we become
With their dear retrospect.*

*So slow and cautiously;
The stars about my head I felt,
About my feet the sea.
I knew not but the next
Would be my final inch,—
This gave me that precarious gait
Some call experience.*

*Obtained my Lodgings, ere myself—
And when I sought my Bed—
The Grave it was reposed upon
The Pillow for my Head—
I waked to find it first awake—
I rose—It followed me—
I tried to drop it in the Crowd—
To lose it in the Sea—
In Cups of artificial Drowse
To steep its shape away—
The Grave—was finished—but the Spade
Remained in Memory—*

II. The Sea

I stepped from plank to plank

III. The Bereaved

*Bereaved of all, I went abroad—
No less bereaved was I
Upon a New Peninsula—
The Grave preceded me—*

Letters to a Frightened Child (2024) Stephen Variames (b. 1986)

- I. *Peanut Butter*
- II. *Magician*

Kimberly Lazzeri, *soprano*
Stephen Variames, *piano*

I. Peanut Butter

*Dear peanut butter,
Good morning, dear boy.
I slipped out of your room last night a few
minutes after you fell asleep.*

*I was happy to see you much calmer than
when our conversation began.
I stroked your curly hair as it lay upon your
unconscious head,
and I prayed that you would someday find
the peace that I saw in your sleeping face.
Please, don't ever be afraid to call me in
these times of fears.*

*I know how hard it is for you, and you may
feel stupid about asking for comfort, but it
makes me happy to relieve your pain.
Have a good day and don't worry about
anything.
Love, Jelly*

II. Magician

*Dear Little Magician,
I cried last night after you finally fell asleep.
I don't know what causes you this anguish.
I knew that must have been you when I
heard an unusual silence at the top of the
steps.*

*I know you were thinking too much and
that must have been what I sensed.
When I came from the living room and saw
your face looking down at me
it looked like you had seen something that
really scared you.*

*I know it was very hard for you to explain to
me how you felt,
because you barely understood yourself.
You just kept saying that you needed help,
that you needed somebody to help you
and then would break of into uncontrollable
sobs*

*that even challenged the hardest of my
hugs.*

*I wondered why you felt such despair and
for what reason you needed help.
No answers revealing themselves,
I just sat with you and squeezed you until
every tear came out.*

*As I carried you back into your room, your
entire body was drenched with exhaustion.
After getting you into some dry pajamas I
sat next to you for a while
rubbing your back and telling you to be
calm,
as small episodes of sobbing would return.
After your eyes shut and I cried out all my
hurt for you I...*

*I prayed that someday a morning would
come that would dry up all your tears of
despair.
Love, Houdini*

The Light I Chase Sophie Watanabe (b. 2005)

Sophie Watanabe, *mezzo-soprano*
John Paul Shannon, *piano*

Text by S. Watanabe

*Shining above my restless night,
brightening the darken room with light
taunting me with golden moonbeams,
calling me out of my night to rise.
The light I chase by day is haunting me at night.*

*And I can't break this sweat.
And I can't breathe.
I will chase this light I want.
I will dream of this light I want.*

- I. Мне детство трудного года (*The Difficult Years of My Childhood*)
 II. И ты, о мама милая моя! (*And You, My Beloved Mama*)
 III. Настанет день, вернемся мы (*The Day will Come When We Will Return*)
 IV. Свиданья радость - беспредельна! (*The Joy of Reunion will be Boundless*)

Meg Booker, *soprano*
 Noah Jacobsen, *piano*
 Gracie Niehaus, *violin*

I. The Difficult Years of My Childhood

*The difficult years of my
 childhood
 Have suddenly turned into
 youth.
 But the elegant cities of Europe
 Have not replaced you in the
 least, my homeland.
 Having left there, maybe for
 years,
 All that is so dear and treasured
 to the heart,
 With fear of never seeing it
 again
 I am drawn back with
 overwhelming force!*

**II. And you, oh my dear
 mama!**

*And you, oh my dear mama!
 Sacrificing yourself, you stayed
 there.
 And now for a second time our
 poor family
 Has been left ripped apart,
 broken.
 The hardest lot fell to you,
 My beloved mother.
 But submitting to God and fate,
 I know that you are always
 hopeful.*

**III. The Day Will Come When
 We Will Return**

*The day will come when we will
 return,
 And our homeland will open its
 doors to us.
 Among friends, in the family
 circle
 We will forget sorrows and
 losses.
 Spring will blossom in the heart-
 Even if it be in winter -
 And off the soul will fall, like a
 husk,
 Everything we have lived
 through, everything alien.*

**IV. The Joy of Reunion is
 Boundless!**

*And my story will be long,
 I am preparing it for you now:
 All these years: without
 embellishments,
 I will tell you about them with
 love.
 After all, it was often hard,
 And everything seemed wild
 and pointless,
 But I am silent: it will pass.
 The joy of reunion is boundless!*

INTERMISSION

- I. *Blue Lobster*
 II. *Stasis*
 III. *In an Accelerated Time Frame*
 IV. *Tante Fräni's Handkerchief*
 V. *The Origin of Romanticism*

Ben Flanders, *baritone*
 Sonya Szabo-Reynolds, *piano*

1. Blue Lobster

*This samurai from inner space clank clanks
 his claws in iridescent slow motion.
 Thanks to his suit he has his own personal
 tank.
 (One in a thousand is blue, the sign tells
 us.)
 Not the pot for him! (Would he, if boiled,
 turn purple?)
 But he'd look swell among the glazed
 ceramicware,
 might even be trained to crack nuts, open
 bottles, serve the salad.
 What goddess in her cups thought up
 this shingled tail, this gawky stance and
 puppet's gait,
 these plates, part tooth, part nail, that thrust
 and parry?
 He can survey his own hinged back with
 moveable eyes.*

Call him Ulysses.

*Ulysses, the sea has boxed you in.
 Perhaps sadness accounts for your bruised
 hue.
 It's always Blue Monday at the Mystic
 Marine Aquarium.
 Clanka clanka clank.
 Across the room sea horses drift in eel grass,
 sharks,
 like Cadillacs, circle on cruise control, flash
 their grillwork.
 An octopus oozes from her shady den.
 Sheepsheads hurry by
 -escapes from the slaughterhouse.
 A school of children in red, blue, green,
 yellow slickers passes (It's raining all over
 Connecticut.)
 And the blue lobster sways on his rock like a
 stranded rover.
 What island this?
 Tell me. Tell me.*

2. Stasis

*Something out there refuses to give up.
 Always air rises into the blue or gray or
 heliotrope.
 A leaf shuffles across the street.
 Under the ice the pond steams and stirs.
 This nameless season that grips us from
 within is far colder, darker, very still.*

3. In an Accelerated Time Frame

*The jungle is full of green, leafy snakes,
 groping towards darkness.
 Birds streak by. Orchids go off with soft
 pops.
 The sun beeps intermittently. Debris rains
 down.
 Your face emerges, spilling its syllables.
 And offshore, the keening of whales rises
 like birdsong*

4. Tante Fräni's Handkerchief

Here is Tante Fräni's handkerchief.
 Her fingers do this, and this, folding and tugging and knotting until,
 from a fist of linen, voilà!
 a little white mouse with lace whiskers quivers in her palm.
 His magnificent tail droops over her wrist.
 His pointy ears tilt this way and that for the sound of laughter—that's
 what he likes.
 He's a natural clown, but nervous.
 His body is stuffed with giggles.
 "We are going to do a trick for the children," says Tante.
 He makes a false start. "No, no," she scolds.
 "Not till I say so. You must relax, calm down."
 She strokes his tail and whispers in his ear.
 He whispers back but she shakes her head.
 "Not today," she says sternly. He whispers again.
 She nods. "Perhaps, if you do it right."
 He gathers himself together, almost stops quivering.
 Tante Fräni says, "Not yet...not yet...now!"
 And the marvelous white handkerchief leaps high over the children's
 hands and heads.

As a reward it will be permitted to hide in Tante Fräni's drawer beside
 the lavender sachet.
 And tomorrow, for love of her, it will become a cradle or a rose.

5. The Origin of Romanticism —a scene from Der Freischütz

"I am the white dove," cries Agathe,
 running across the stage in her white dress,
 wreathed in the hermit's white roses.
 Her lover has already raised his gun to fire at white, whatever its
 blurred shape.
 The bullet begins its song,
 swaying from white to the dark Other.
 Both fall. The lights go up.
 And the century ends in a woods of cardboard and smoke.
 But no, she lifts her head.
 Her lover weeps.
 The distraught chorus revives.
 We will live our long lives after all.
 Sometimes it happens

Bluegrass (2022) Sarah Hutchings (b. 1984)

- I. Coal Miner's Eldest Daughter
- II. Great Big Taters
- III. Going Across the Sea
- IV. The Ramblin' Gambler (Hiccup Song)

Joy Wallace Burdette, soprano
 Christina Lalog Seal, piano
 William Herzog, violin

Text Traditional Folk

I. Coal Miner's Eldest Daughter

Do you know what it means to be
 a coal miner's eldest daughter?
 Hold on!

Day in and day out there was kids
 to bathe,
 and a dinner of beans or no one
 ate that day.
 We laughed in the shadows and
 chased the twins 'cross the yard,
 but it were all for nothin' if his
 steak dinner weren't hot.

As a coal miner's daughter my
 hands were rough and worn,
 O toiled in the darkness, my body
 tired and torn.
 But my spirit was whole and my
 mind was sound,
 But dreams were just a waste 'til I
 could get out that door.

In this quintessential household
 the roles were strictly defined.
 Mother toiled in the kitchen, her
 dreams left far behind.
 And my father in the mines, his
 health and spirit had declined.
 Forced to carry the burden with an
 angry heart and mind.

How he refused to let go of what
 he held deep inside,
 His belief in coal -- it was a badge
 of pride.
 For it was the foundation on
 which my family relied,

And he vowed to keep it going
 with ev'ry ounce of sweat he
 supplied.
 Do you know what it means to be
 a coal miner's eldest daughter?

Day in and day out I did all that I
 could,
 But my worth was measured by
 his belly and his mood.
 I laughed through the hardships,
 thought it wasn't all good.
 His desires and his whims I
 always understood
 Hold on! Hold on!

Then one day a boy came and
 took me away.
 Do you know what it means to be
 a coal miner's eldest daughter?

II. Great Big Taters

Great big taters in sandy land.
 Plow it up, plow it up, Harry
 Hildebrand!
 Great big taters in a sandy land.
 Git' there Eli, git' there if you can.
 Great big taters in a sandy land.

We all dig, dig em' out, just as fast
 as we can.
 The folks all buy them from a
 foolish man
 raisin' great big taters in a sandy
 land.

Sow them oats but you can't get
 a stand.

Corn won't grow in that sandy
 land!
 Folks won't think you are much of
 a man
 if you can't make a living on
 sandy land!
 Sift the meal and save the bran.
 Sift the meal and save the bran.
 Goodbye gals, I'm goin' in!
 Raise great big taters in a sandy
 land.
 Raise big taters in a sandy land.

III. Going Across the Sea

I'm going across the sea
 forevermore.
 Left my handsome sugar standin'
 in the door.
 Won't you come and go, go away
 with me?
 Fly me to my charming,
 handsome love.
 I'm going across the sea.
 Wind is howling low, wind is
 howling high.
 Go with me, my smiling galant
 beau 'til the day I die.

Donie, Donie, Donie what makes
 your face so red?
 I'll chase my life no matter where
 it may tread.

IV. The Ramblin' Gambler

I'm a ramblin' gambler a long
 ways from home
 and them that don't like me can

leave me alone!
 I'll take up my fiddle and rosin my
 bow, and them that don't like me
 can leave me the hell alone!

I'll eat when I'm hungry and drink
 when I'm dry.
 If a tree don't fall on me I'll live
 til' I die!
 It's beefsteak when I'm hungry
 and bourbon when I'm dry,
 money when I'm hard up, sweet
 heaven when I die.

I'll take up my fiddle and rosin my
 bow, and them that don't like me
 can leave me alone!

I'll cross the wide ocean my
 fortune to try.
 And when I get over I'll sit down
 and cry!
 I'll cross the wide ocean my
 fortune to try.
 And it isn't the long journey that
 troubles me so,
 it's leavin' the darlin' I've courted
 so long.

O Lordy how bad do I feel!
 O Lordy how tired do I feel!

My shoes is all tore up, my toes're
 stickin' out.
 Don't get some rye bourbon, I'm a
 goin' up the spout.
 Gonna beat on the counter, or I'll
 make the glass ring!
 More bourbon to me!
 O Lordy!

THANK YOU!