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## Recital: Celebrating LGBTQ+ History Month, October 13, 2022

Illinois State University School of Music

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**Illinois State University  
Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts  
School of Music**

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**Recital Celebrating  
LGBTQ+ History Month**

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**Center for the Performing Arts  
October 13, 2022  
Thursday Evening  
7:00 p.m.**

**This is the twenty-first program of the 2022-2023 season.**

## Program

Please silence all electronic devices for the duration of the concert. Thank you.

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 6  
Allegro ma non troppo  
Adagio  
Allegro appassionato

Samuel Barber  
(1910-1981)

Adriana Ransom, *cello*  
Lu Witzig, *piano*

“If Thou’lt Be Mine”  
From Three Poems of Thomas Moore (2007)

Darien Shulman  
(born 1980)

“Someone New”  
From Modern Love Songs (1997-2002)

Chester Biscardi  
(born 1948)

Good Bones (2017)

Dennis Tobenski  
(born 1982)

Dennis Tobenski, *voice*  
Geoffrey Duce, *piano*

### *Alumni Recognition – Dennis Tobenski*

### *~ Intermission ~*

"L'énamourée"

Reynaldo Hahn  
(1874-1947)

"The Last Rose of Summer"

Folk Song  
arranged by Benjamin Britten  
(1913-1974)

Elizabeth Thompson, *voice*  
Geoffrey Duce, *piano*

Chelsea Bridge

Billy Strayhorn  
(1915-1967)

Erik Swanson, *guitar*

Michael’s Spoon

Eve Beglarian  
(born 1958)

Mark Babbitt, *trombone and electronics*

Pantone 258

Midori Samson  
(born 1992)

Midori Samson, *bassoon and electronics*

go to the garden

Eris DeJarnett  
(born 1995)

Anne McNamara, *trumpet and electronics*

## Program Notes

### *Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, Op. 6*

Samuel Barber

Duration: 18:00

Samuel Barber wrote his cello sonata in 1932-33 at the age of twenty-two, just as he was finishing his undergraduate studies in composition at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. It was performed by fellow student and cellist Orlando Cole; both Barber and Cole would return to teach at Curtis later in their careers. Barber also met his lifelong personal and professional partner, composer Gian Carlo Menotti, at Curtis around this same time. The thematic material of the cello sonata is very compact, with brief but intriguing melodies that highlight the range and depth of the cello. In a manner similar to Barber's famous *Adagio for Strings* (from his String Quartet, Op. 11, written in 1936), the beautiful primary theme of the second movement brings the tumultuous energy of the outer movements to a near stand-still. The success of the Cello Sonata helped Barber secure important travel grants to continue his studies in Europe after graduation.

- Adriana Ransom

### *Song Set*

Darian Shulman, Chester Biscardi, Dennis Tobenski

Duration: 13:00

#### "If Thou'lt Be Mine"

I moved to NYC in 2004, three months after graduating from ISU, and a year and a half later, I had started a concert series in Manhattan. As a consequence of the inaugural concert, I met my now-husband (we were married in 2015). In 2007, he wrote a short song cycle for me using poetry by the 19th century Irish poet Thomas Moore, which I premiered on the same concert that I premiered the voice and piano version of *Gay Life* by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer David Del Tredici, who was at the piano for the performance.

#### "Someone New"

Chester Biscardi is a dear friend, and I had the pleasure of giving the NY premiere of his cycle *Modern Love Songs* on the same concert as Darien's and David's pieces. "Someone New" is one of my favorite songs in the cycle and takes a novel approach to the text by William Zinsser: the pronouns are mix-and match - singers can use whichever pronouns they use for themselves, and for the person that they're singing about.

#### "Good Bones"

In June 2016, Maggie Smith's publisher released her poem "Good Bones" online, and a few days later it went viral in the wake of the Pulse nightclub massacre. I'd known Maggie for several years after we'd been in residence together at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, so I reached out to ask if I could set this amazing poem to music. It's one of my favorite songs I've written, and I'm excited to be performing it tonight.

- Dennis Tobenski

### *Song Set*

Reynaldo Hahn and Benjamin Britten (arranger)

Duration: 6:00

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) was Venezuelan by birth and pursued a career based out of Paris. A composer, singer, and conductor, Hahn considered attention to text and poetry paramount to his vocal writing. He maintained a notable friendship with the prolific writer Marcel Proust, with

whom he had a romantic relationship for a time, until Proust's death. Benjamin Britten (1913-1974) was one of Britain's most prolific composers, exploring a unique musical language across the classical genre. Like Hahn, Britten's attention to text is critical to his writing, and in both of these selections, melancholic longing for departed loved ones is prescient. In both selections, sparse piano writing still richly supports the expressive and pensive vocal lines.

- Elizabeth Thompson

"L'Énamourée," by Reynaldo Hahn  
poem by Théodore de Banville

They say, my dove,  
that you are still dead and dreaming  
beneath a tombstone;  
but you awaken, revived,  
for the soul that adores you,  
oh pensive beloved!

Through the sleepless nights,  
in the murmuring breeze,  
I caress your long veils,  
your swaying hair  
and your half-closed wings  
which flutter among the roses.

Oh delights! I breathe  
your divine blond tresses!  
Your pure voice, a kind of lyre,  
moves on the swell of the waters  
and touches them gently, suavely,  
like a lamenting swan!

"The Last Rose of Summer," from folksong arrangements by Benjamin Britten  
poem by Thomas Moore

'Tis the last rose of summer,  
Left blooming alone;  
All her lovely companions  
Are faded and gone;  
No flow'r of her kindred,  
No rosebud is nigh  
To reflect back her blushes,  
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one,  
To pine on the stem;  
Since the lovely are sleeping,  
Go, sleep thou with them;  
Thus kindly I scatter  
Thy leaves o'er the bed,  
Where thy mates of the garden  
Lie senseless and dead.

So soon may I follow,  
When friendships decay,  
And from love's shining circle  
The gems drop away!  
When true hearts lie wither'd,

And fond ones are flown,  
Oh! who would inhabit  
This bleak world alone?

***Chelsea Bridge***  
Billy Strayhorn  
Duration: 5:00

As one of the foremost jazz composers of the Swing era, Billy Strayhorn was no stranger to writing beautifully expressive and harmonically complex ballads. While a number of these songs have entered the standard repertoire, his song "Chelsea Bridge" remains perhaps his best known (and most performed) ballad among contemporary jazz musicians.

Composed in 1941 (at the cusp of the coming Bebop era) for the Duke Ellington Orchestra, its dark melodic-minor derived harmonies and parallel moving chords evoke his classical training and love of French impressionism, which along with his sophisticated use of melody based on upper harmonic extensions, predate (and indeed foreshadow) the coming direction of post-war jazz.

Although "Chelsea Bridge" uses a simple 32 bar song form, its elegant harmonic construction makes it a delight to improvise over, with plenty of time to stretch out and explore the harmonic implications of his winding melody.

- Erik Swanson

***Michael's Spoon***  
Eve Beglarian  
Duration: 7:00

The inspiration for Michael's Spoon was this text from the end of J.M. Coetzee's 1983 novel, *The Life and Times of Michael K*:

And if the old man climbed out of the cart and stretched himself (things were gathering pace now) and looked at where the pump had been that the soldiers had blown up so that nothing should be left standing, and complained, saying, "What are we going to do about water?", he, Michael K, would produce a teaspoon from his pocket, a teaspoon and a long roll of string. He would clear the rubble from the mouth of the shaft, he would bend the handle of the teaspoon in a loop and tie the string to it, he would lower it down the shaft deep into the earth, and when he brought it up there would be water in the bowl of the spoon; and in that way, he would say, one can live.

***Pantone 258***  
Midori Samson  
Duration: 6:00

My electroacoustic compositions use soundscapes and electronic distortion to explore themes of identity, family, relationships, self, trauma, resilience, and reclamation. Pantone 258 is my chaotic attempt toward queering the bassoon. This six-minute piece for electronic soundscape track and improvised bassoon is in three distinct sections, each one inspired by the colors on my favorite pride flag. The first: Pantone 226 is punk and celebratory. The second: Pantone 286 is aquatic and undulating. And the third: Pantone 258 finally finds stillness and harmony. Audio materials in the track include nature field recordings, percussion, recitations of each Pantone code, and sine tones at hertz numbers matching the Pantone codes. Thank you for joining me for this fun and deeply personal world premiere!

- Midori Samson

*go to the garden*

Eris DeJarnett

Duration: 9:00

Eris DeJarnett's *go to the garden* is a brand-new work that was composed thanks to a consortium led by trumpeter and founder of Diversify the Stand, Ashley Killam. Dr. Anne McNamara was a member of the consortium and was interested in supporting the composition both because of what the piece stands for and because of its composer, Eris DeJarnett. Eris is a genderqueer interdisciplinary narrative artist and educator working with music, text, and movement to examine power structures, community, and queerness within and beyond the performing arts and academia. Hailed as having “a keen affinity for vulnerability, in both eirself and others,” eir musical catalog explores sexual assault, rape culture, trauma, gender, and recovery, often centering the human voice amidst soundscapes of experimental and noise-based practices. Eris’ work also emphasizes the importance of personal development at the performer’s own pace—musically and in life—and as such, they regularly work with student musicians and developing performers to craft pieces that suit their individual needs. Eris holds an MFA from the Performer-Composer program at CalArts and a BM in Theory and Composition from Arizona State University.

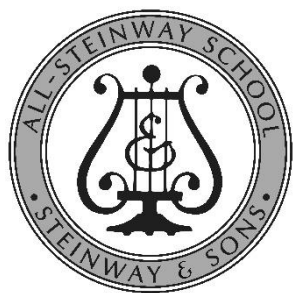
About the piece, Eris explains: “Calm, quiet spaces can be effective and popular sites of introspection, reflection, and emotional processing, yet access to such spaces-plus the time and energy required to travel to them-remains elusive for many. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic keeps even more of us from calming spaces we previously could access while requiring an isolation and distance from others that feels anything but restful. Some of us have created new spaces for that vulnerability and processing, often online, but barriers to access still remain, and virtually everyone has been saddled with grief, anxiety, and burnout that we are unable to fully process. Rather than attempt a true-to-life reflection of this in *go to the garden*, I’ve crafted a narrator, voiced by Tess Galbiati, who’s spent years upon years building a lush, overflowing space in their mind. This work examines what happens after that world experiences a deep, radical disturbance. It’s constructed metaphorically, but listeners and performers may find connections to trauma processing and recovery that map onto many life altering events, not just a pandemic.”

- Anne McNamara

## About Our Alumni Honoree



Dennis Tobenski is a composer, singer, and die-hard advocate for living composers. As a composer and performer, he embraces emotional complexity and honesty, and never shies away from vulgarity or a good laugh (no polite chuckles, please). Whether he's behind the microphone as the host of the *Music Publishing Podcast* or working as the creator and driving force behind the *NewMusicShelf Anthologies of New Music*, he lifts his colleagues up, and works to build structures and communities that he wished he'd had as a young musician. Dennis lives in NYC with his husband Darien Shulman and their cat Pistachio.



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