

Müzik
Bilkent

MODERN AMERICAN VOICE RECITAL

JENNIFER TIPTON SOPRANO
OLIVER JIA PİYANO

Gwyneth Walker | Jake Heggie | Carlisle Floyd | Anthony Josep
Ricky Ian Gordon | Eric Whitacre | Libby Larsen
William Bolcom | Stephen Sondheim | William Finn

19 Nisan 2022 Salı, 20:00 Bilkent Konser Salonu



Bilkent Üniversitesi

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Gwyneth Walker
(b. 1947)

“Waterbird” is part of a song cycle *The Sun is Love* (2002). Pianist, Jamie Shaak, commissioned **Gwyneth Walker** (b. 1947) to compose a work to be performed at her wedding. The bride’s late father admired the work of **Rumi**, so Walker chose to set his words (translated by Coleman Barks). Walker’s music is driven by text; she sought to “capture the simplicity and variety of the Rumi style: the joyful circling of the sun, the passionate surrender to love and bouncy flirtatiousness.” Circling patterns in the piano are meant to mimic the spinning of whirling dervishes. The voice and piano often interact to depict imagery of the text. Despite Walker’s desire for the cycle to be performed as a whole, “Waterbird” is often performed on its own as it is in this evening’s performance.



Rumi
(1207-1273)

Waterbird

What I want is to see your face
in a tree, in the sun coming out,
in the air.

What I want

is to hear the falcon drum,
and light again on your forearm.

To see in every palm your elegant silver coin shavings,
to turn with the wheel of the rain,
to fall with the falling bread.

What I want is to see your face.

To swim like a huge fish
in ocean water,

to be Jacob recognizing Joseph.
To be a desert mountain
instead of a city.

I'm tired of cowards.
I want to live with lions,
with Moses.

I want to sing like birds sing,
not worrying who hears,
or what they think.

I am a waterbird, flying into the sun.

What I want is to see your face.
beyond wanting, beyond place,

I am a waterbird, flying into the sun.



Carlisle Floyd
(1926-2021)

Carlisle Floyd (1926-2021) ‘the father of American opera’ wrote the music and libretto for *Susannah* (1955). He was born and raised in the American South and brought southern dialect and culture to the opera stage. The story is based on the apocryphal tale of Susanna. Originally based in ancient Babylon, Floyd set his opera in an isolated fictional small town in the Tennessee mountains. “Ain’t it a pretty night” takes place in Act I. The young, naive Susannah is with her friend, Little Bat (that is his name). She dreams of seeing the world beyond the mountains, even though she would miss the home she loves. The music vacillates between peaceful moments representing her home and turbulent settings reflecting the unknown while also foreshadowing what is to come.

Ain’t it a pretty night

Ain't it a pretty night!
The sky's so dark and velvet-like
And it's all lit up with stars
It's like a great big mirror
Reflectin' fireflies over a pond
Look at all them stars, Little Bat
The longer y'look the more y'see
The sky seems so heavy with stars
That it might fall right down out of heaven
And cover us all up in one big blanket of velvet
All stitched with diamon's

Ain't it a pretty night
Just think, all those stars can all peep down
An' see way beyond where we can:
They can see way beyond them mountains
To Nashville and Asheville and Knoxville
I wonder what it's like out there
Out there beyond them mountains
Where the folks talk nice an' the folks dress nice
Like y'see in the mail order catalogs
I aim to leave this valley some day
An' find out for myself:
To see all the tall buildin's and all the street lights
An' to be one o'them folks myself

I wonder if I'd get lonesome fer the valley though
Fer the sound of crickets an' the smell of pine straw
Fer soft little rabbits an' bloomin' things
An' the mountains turnin' gold in the fall
But I could always come back I get homesick fer the valley
So I'll leave it someday an' see fer myself
Someday I'll leave an' then I'll come back
When I've seen what's beyond them mountains

Ain't it a pretty night
The sky's so heavy with stars tonight
That it could fall right down out of heaven
An' cover us up, and cover us up
In one big blanket of velvet and diamon's



Jake Heggie
(b.1961)

Jake Heggie (b. 1961) is a leading composer in American opera and art song. After studying composition at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Heggie suffered a hand injury and took a job in the publicity department of the San Francisco Opera. While working at the opera, he befriended a local writer, opera lover, and arts supporter: **Gini Savage**. Savage was taking a writing class and was assigned to write an “I want” poem that included monosyllabic lines. Around the time of the assignment a bobcat in the California hills attacked and killed a young woman on a hike. This event was the inspiration for her assignment/poem, “Animal Passion,” which she casually showed Heggie. The then unknown composer was immediately drawn to it and asked her to collaborate on songs with him. The collaboration resulted in *Natural Selection* (1997), a set of five songs including “Animal Passion.”

Animal Passion

Fierce as a bobcat's spring
With start-up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet
And slide me into the gutter
Without the niceties of small-talk roses or champagne
I mean business
I want whiskey
I want to be swallowed whole
I want tiles to spring off the walls
When we enter hotel rooms or afternoon apartments
I won't pussy-foot around responsibility

"shoulds" and "oughts" are out for good
And I don't want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic
Yowls and growls to sound like the lion house at feeding time
I don't give a damn who hears
I don't give a damn!
No discreet eavesdroppers' coughs can stop us in our frenzy
Let the voyeurs voient
And let the great cat(ss) come.



Anthony Josep
(b. 2001)



Maggie Wilkinson
(b. 2001)

American students born after 1999 have never known a world without the threat of gun violence in their schools. Both teachers and students periodically have active shooter drills and training. Unfortunately, more school shootings happen every year. According to the USA Today, there were 136 school shooting incidents last fall semester: August 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

From 2016-2021 I taught at a performing arts high school and college in Miami, Florida: New World School of the Arts. My vocal student, **Anthony Josep** (b. 2001), also composed. "The Lucky Ones" is part of a song cycle, *Thoughts of November*, he wrote featuring text by writer and fellow New Worlder, **Maggie Wilkinson** (b. 2001). Josep states the piece, "...is a true moment of reflection and of contemplation at the thought of living in a world where the ones we love can be taken from us in an instant. This piece is an ultimate feeling of gratitude." Wilkinson now attends college in Tennessee and Josep is completing his junior at the Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana.

The Lucky Ones

This Week in Santa Clarita, California,

Two Students died after another student obtained a forty-five-caliber handgun
And opened fire inside their school building
Dominick Michael. Fourteen.
Gracie Annie. Fifteen.
Each night this week I passed my brother's room
To find him sleeping, the lights still on
Floor covered in wrinkly laundry
And half empty bottles of acrylic paint.
His chest rises, and fall, then rises again,
And I wonder why
are we the lucky ones?



Dominic Michael Blackwell
(2005-2019)

Gracie Anne Muehlberger
(2004-2019)

Lana Turner (1921-1995) was an American Actress and pin-up model in the 1940's-1950's. She was one the highest paid actresses of her time. Her success and tumultuous personal life made her a prominent figure in the tabloids.



Lana Turner
(1921-1995)

For the last 40 years **Ricky Ian Gordon** (1956) has been a prolific vocal music composer of art song, opera, and musical theater. His works often cover a wide array of idiosyncratic themes such as iconic fictional literature, the poems of Langston Hughes, and the Aids epidemic. In 1985, Gordon set **Frank O'Hara's** (1926-1966) famous "Poem (Lana Turner has Collapsed)" to music. This piece is a hysterical, overly dramatic work that jumps from lamenting the potential demise of a Hollywood icon to colloquial conversations about the weather.



Frank O'Hara
(1926-1966)



Ricky Ian Gordon
(b. 1956)

Poem (Lana Turner has collapsed!)

Lana Turner has collapsed!
I was trotting along and suddenly
it started raining and snowing
and you said it was hailing
but hailing hits you on the head
hard so it was really snowing and

raining and I was in such a hurry
to meet you but the traffic
was acting exactly like the sky
and suddenly I see a headline
LANA TURNER HAS COLLAPSED!
there is no snow in Hollywood
there is no rain in California
I have been to lots of parties
and acted perfectly disgraceful
but I never actually collapsed
oh Lana Turner we love you get up

Having sold over 40 million copies **Margaret Wise Brown's** (1910-1942) "Goodnight Moon" is one of America's most beloved children's books. However, at the time of its publication, the book and its author challenged traditional societal norms. Brown lived a rebellious lifestyle as an openly bisexual, financially independent, self-possessed woman at a time in America where this was not acceptable. She was part of the literary children's movement known as "Here and Now" that focused on tangible objects and emotions rather than traditional plot driven fable/morality tales. In addition to her experimental style, she chose modernist painters, such as Clement Hurd, to illustrate her books.



Margaret Wise Brown
(1910-1942)



Eric Whitacre
(b. 1970)

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) is Grammy Award-winning composer, conductor, and celebrity in the choral world. His choral compositions are known for chord clusters sung with straight tone to lock harmonies and often creates texture through unconventional human sounds and polyrhythms. "Goodnight Moon" was his son's favorite bedtime story. After reading the book to his child "thousands of times," Whitacre set the text to music. Both choral and solo arrangements are performed.

Goodnight Moon

In the great green room
There was a telephone
And a red balloon

And a picture of –
The cow jumping over the moon

And there were three little bears sitting on chairs
And two little kittens
And a pair of mittens
And a little toy house
And a young mouse
And a comb and a brush and a bowl full of mush
And a quiet old lady who was whispering "hush"

Goodnight room
Goodnight moon
Goodnight cow jumping over the moon
Goodnight light
And the red balloon

Goodnight bears
Goodnight chairs
Goodnight kittens
And goodnight mittens

Goodnight clocks
And goodnight socks
Goodnight little house
And goodnight mouse

Goodnight comb
And goodnight brush
Goodnight nobody
Goodnight mush
And goodnight to the old lady whispering "hush"

Goodnight stars
Goodnight air
Goodnight noises everywhere



Libby Larsen
(b. 1950)

During the past fifty years, Grammy-award winning composer, **Libby Larsen** (b.1950) has been prolifically composing works of varying genres: solo, vocal, chamber, orchestral, operatic, and choral. She has produced, “...one of the most impressive bodies of music of our time” and is one the most performed living composers in America. She has set both poetry and prose but is particularly inspired with free meter, raw emotion, and colorful personalities found in first-person prose: “I had no thought about writing love songs.”

In 2000 the Marilyn Horne Foundation approached her to compose a collection of songs for their annual competition winner, Meaghan Miller. The texts were taken from letters and gallows speeches of Henry's first five wives: Katherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard. Henry's last wife Katherine Parr, outlived him, therefore she was not included in this cycle. In addition to historical text, Larsen has woven in popular lute songs from the time of Elizabeth I (the daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn). This cycle is notoriously tricky for the singer and pianist. Because the women were unsure of their fate, Larsen wanted the singer to also feel unsure of her place in the music.



Katherine of Aragon
(1485-1536)

“Nature wronged the Queen in not making her a man, but for her sex she would have surpassed all the heroes of history” – Thomas Cromwell

Katherine of Aragon (1485-1536) was the daughter of Queen Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon. At the age of three, she was betrothed to King Henry VII’s eldest son, Arthur. Arthur was of poor health and died five months after marrying Katherine. She maintained throughout her life and swore on her deathbed the marriage had not been consummated. Upon Henry VII’s deathbed he told his son, Henry VIII to marry Katherine. On July 11, 1509, the eighteen-year-old Henry married the twenty-three-year-old Katherine of Aragon.

Katherine and Henry were successfully married for approximately sixteen years. The marriage began to suffer, when Katherine failed to deliver a healthy son and Henry had fallen in love with Katherine’s lady-in-waiting: Anne Boleyn. Katherine refused to annul her marriage on the grounds that she had bedded Henry’s brother. Therefore, Henry separated her from their daughter Mary, sent her into exile and controversially married Anne Boleyn.

For nine years, Katherine peacefully defied the King, retained the support of much of England, and refused to renounce her title of Queen. As a result, Henry left the Roman Catholic Church and created the Church of England. On January 7, 1536, Katherine died in her sleep at the age of fifty. Before going to bed that night, she wrote Henry a letter, parts of which have now been set in Larsen’s *Try Me, Good King*. John Dowland’s lute song “In Darkness Let Me Dwell” is quoted in the right hand of the piano as well as bell-tolls marking her impending death. The pedal tone is meant to be create psychological and unrelenting tension. Larsen represents Katherine’s Catholicism in the unmetred vocal line evocative Gregorian chant and vocal runs represent a Spanish guitar to honor her heritage.

Katherine of Aragon

My most dear lord, King, and husband,

the hour of my death now drawing on,
the tender love I owe you forces me to commend myself unto you
and to put you in remembrance of the health and welfare of your soul.
My most dear lord, King, and husband,
you have cast me into many calamities
and yourself into many troubles.
For my part, I pardon you everything
and I wish to devoutly pray God
that He will pardon you also.
For the rest I commend unto you our daughter, Mary,
beseeching you to be a good father unto her.
Lastly, I make this vow,
that my eyes desire you above all things,
above all things.



Anne Boleyn

(1501-1536)

“Fighting is essentially a masculine idea, a woman’s weapon is her tongue.” - Hermione Gingold

Few women in European history have been as notorious and polarizing as **Anne Boleyn** (1501-1536). During a time of religious turmoil and reform, she was Catholic; but believed in some protestant teachings. Therefore, many Catholic historians wrote propagandist tales of Anne involving promiscuity and witchcraft which still exists today. Protestant historians praise Anne for religious reform and regard her as a martyr. Modern day historian David Starkey perhaps more accurately describes Anne as “...a brutal and effective politician.”

Anne was Henry’s “...blind and wretched obsession.” She possessed unprecedented influence over the king. For several years Anne shunned his physical advances and gifts, refusing to give into him unless she was made queen. Seven months after the couple was married, Anne gave birth to Elizabeth I. However, she was unable to deliver another healthy baby (particularly a son) and Henry had little patience for her volatile personality.

Catholics/Katherine of Aragon supporters recognized her vulnerability and plotted her political assassination. They concocted elaborate charges of adultery, incest, and treason.

Because Henry desperately wanted a son and was now in love with Anne's lady-in-waiting, Jane Seymour, he cooperated. Anne was charged with five separate cases of adultery, one of which included her own brother. With no substantial evidence to support the charges brought against her, she and the five men were found guilty and sentenced to death. Before her trial began, Henry sent for a swordsman from Calais, specifically for her execution.

Thomas Campion's "If my Complaints" is found in the main motif of the voice and piano. The music changes as Anne attempts various ways of appealing toward Henry. Larsen indicates the slow section be sung as a lute song, as Henry was a lute song composer. As she pleads for her life and a fair trial, the piano represents the clergy denying her requests. The song closes with a recitative. Bell-tolls are found in the bass of the piano. Right before she dies, she says, "I pray God save the King." Anne shows reverence to Henry up until her end because any defiance of the King would have put her daughter Elizabeth's life in danger.

Anne Boleyn

Try me, good king,
let me have a lawful trial and let not my enemies sit as my accusers and judges.
Try me, good king,
let me receive an open trial for my truth shall fear no open shame.
Never a prince had a wife more loyal, more loyal in all duty,
never a prince had a wife more loyal, more loyal in all true affection,
never a prince had a wife more loyal than you have found in Anne Bulen.
You have chosen me from low estate to be your wife and companion.
Do you not remember the words of your own true hand?
'My own darling, I would you were in my arms
for I think it long since I kissed you, my mistress and my friend.'
Do you not remember the words of your own true hand?
Try me, good king, Try me.
If ever I have found favor in your sight,
if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears,
if ever I have found favor in your sight,
if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears,
let me obtain this request and my innocence shall be known.
Let me obtain this request and my innocence shall be cleared.
Try me. Try me. Try me.
Good Christian people, I come hither to die
and by the law I am judged to die.
I pray God, I pray God save the King.
I hear the executioner's good, and my neck is so little.



Jane Seymour
(1508-1537)

“Birth and death; we all move between these two unknowns.” - Bryant H. McGill

Ironically, Anne’s replacement came to power using the tactics Anne had pioneered. Anne spent seven years trying to become queen; **Jane Seymour** (1508-1537) did it in seven months. Henry’s third wife was submissive, quiet, and delivered a son, making her his favorite wife. By the time of Anne’s execution, Henry’s intentions with Jane were widely known. The betrothal was publicly announced the day after Anne’s death and the couple was married ten days later. The sweet, demure Jane had no qualms regarding Anne’s dismissal or unprecedented execution. As Queen, she adopted the motto, “Bound to obey and serve.”

On October 12, 1537, Henry became the father to a healthy, legitimate male heir: Prince Edward. Immediately after the delivery celebrations began, including a christening witnessed by 400 people to welcome the new prince. The labor and celebratory events were too much for the young mother and she fell gravely ill three days after giving birth. While in bed, Jane dictated a letter to the Privy Council announcing Prince Edward’s birth. Jane died in her sleep on October 24, 1537. For the first time in his life, Henry VIII truly grieved for the death of a wife.

“Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming” by Michael Praetorius is found in the right hand of the piano. The song originally represents the birth of Jesus Christ but refers to Prince Edward in this context. Bell-tolls are also found throughout this piece however instead of representing death, they represent the joyous birth of the long-awaited heir. The slow tempo of the song correlates to Jane’s lack of energy due to declining health. The song closes on a hummed vocal line as Jane was both singing to her baby and dying.

Jane Seymour

“Right, trusty and Well Beloved,
we greet you well,
for as much as be the inestimable goodness
of Almighty God,
we be delivered of a prince, a prince.
I love the rose both red and white,

to hear of them is my delight,
Joyed may we be, our prince to see,
and roses three.”



Anne of Cleves
(1515-1557)

“Ah, yes divorce...from the Latin word meaning to rip out a man’s genitals through his wallet.”
- Robin Williams

To find a wife that was both beautiful and politically beneficial Henry hired the court painter to capture the images of potential brides throughout Europe. Henry, now forty-nine-years-old, chose a portrait of the twenty-three-year-old German princess, **Anne of Cleves** (1515-1557).

Details of Henry and Anne’s first meeting vary, but all accounts conclude that neither party was pleased with the other. After the meeting Henry was outraged exclaiming, “I like her not! I like her not!” In January of 1540 the unhappy couple married. Unlike the innumerable women of Henry’s past, the new Queen was completely indifferent and unresponsive to him. Desperate for a divorce, Henry officially testified to his sexual displeasure. After six months of wedlock, the marriage was officially annulled on the grounds of the possible illegality of a prior marital pre-contract and Henry’s lack of consent and inability to consummate the marriage.

Because Henry did not want to enrage the Duke of Cleves and Anne had been so willing to comply with the annulment, Henry gave Anne a substantial financial settlement including a yearly income, several properties, a place at court, and the title of the King’s sister. Anne gracefully bowed out of her role as Queen and retreated to a happy private life, in which she never remarried.

The tempo and lilt to “Anne of Cleves” is reminiscent of a Laendler (a traditional Germanic folk dance. Thomas Campion’s “I Care Not for These Ladies” is incorporated into the melody of the voice and piano. Parallel tritones in the accompaniment represent the incompatibility of the couple.

Anne of Cleves

I have been informed by certain lords
Of the doubts and questions which have been found in our marriage
It may please your majesty to know
That though this case be most hard and sorrowful
I have and do accept the clergy for my judges
So now the clergy hath given their sentence, hath given their sentence.
I approve. I neither can nor will repute myself for your grace's wife,
Yet it my please your highness to take me for your sister, your sister,
For which I most humbly thank you.
Your majesty's most humble sister,
Anne, daughter of Cleves.



Katherine Howard

(c.1523-1542)

I would not be a queen
For all the world.

- William Shakespeare *Henry VIII*

As Anne Boleyn's first cousin, **Katherine Howard** (c.1523-1542) had royal blood, but not enough to expect a royal marriage. When she was given a position as lady-in-waiting to Anne of Cleves, she stopped seeing her then-boyfriend, Francis Dereham, and moved to court.

Henry was immediately smitten with Katherine, who was estimated to be between fifteen and eighteen years-old at the time. The couple was married in 1540. At 49 years of age, the King was long past his prime and suffered from several unpleasant health issues. Katherine was a beautiful teenager and gracefully ignored Henry's shortcomings.

Thomas Crammer, the king's advisor, and a secret protestant did not want a Catholic queen and began investigating Katherine's life. Cranmer discovered Katherine had been sexually experienced and had a possible pre-contract to marry Dereham, thus making her marriage to Henry invalid. She had also had a relationship with Thomas Culpepper.

Culpepper was beheaded and Dereham was hanged to the point of death, emasculated, disemboweled, beheaded and then chopped into four pieces. Katherine was also sentenced to death. In the time leading up to her execution, Cranmer described her as "...in such lamentation and heaviness as I never saw no creature, so that it would have pitied any man's heart in the world to have looked upon." On the way to her execution, she passed the rotting heads of her lovers. At the approximate age of twenty, she was executed after witnessing her friend's botched beheading. Text for her song comes from her execution speech given while standing in the blood of her friend.

The same lute song, "In Darkness Let Me Dwell" that was used for "Katherine of Aragon" is also used in "Katherine Howard." Bell-tolls marking death are once again found in the accompaniment. Additionally, the accompaniment has a dry tone and a tempo marking of 60 bpm to resemble a clock ticking and Katherine's impending doom. Final scales in the vocal line are emblematic of her final terrified screams. The piece closes with fortissimo bell-tolls followed by a final statement of "In Darkness Let Me Dwell."

Katherine Howard

God Have mercy on my soul.
Good people, I beg you pray for me.
By the journey upon which I am bound,
I have not wronged the King.
Brothers, I have not wronged the King,
I have not wronged the King.
But it is true that long before the King took me,
I loved Thomas Culpepper.
I wish to God I had done as Culpepper wished me,
For at the time the King wanted me,
Culpepper urged me to say that I was pledged to him.
Brothers, I wish to God I had done as he wished me,
For at the time the King wanted me,
Culpepper urged me to say that I was pledged to him.
If I had done as he wished me,
I should not die this death, nor would he.
God have mercy my soul
Ah, Good people I beg you pray for me.
Ah, I die a queen
but I would rather die the wife of Culpepper.

Cabarets began in Paris in the 1880's and soon spread throughout Europe, specifically Germany. In her book "The Cabaret," Lisa Appignanesi writes that cabarets, "...emerged either as a laboratory, a testing ground for young artists who often deliberately advertised themselves as avant-grade, or as the satirical stage of contemporaneity, a critically reflective mirror of topical events, morals, politics, and culture. In the best instances, it was both." Cabaret performers included a variety of left leaning actors, musicians, comedians, and artists often

seeking refuge from societal and government censorship. While traditional cabarets are no longer in vogue, the term is now associated with a particular eclectic style. Composer **William Bolcom** (b.1932) states, “Today, my definition of cabaret is whatever the New York Times can’t put into some other category in their two pages of concerts on Sundays. It ends up in ‘cabaret’ because they don’t know where else to put it.”



William Bolcom
(b. 1932)

At age eleven, Bolcom began studying composition at the University of Washington. Bolcom rebelled against atonality and serialism, and has written works for symphonies, chamber ensembles, solo instrumental, opera, and theater that freely cross pollinate traditional concert and popular styles. His compositions thrive ‘in the cracks’ between genres, “I hope to embrace an enormous emotional range in music: from the sublime to the ridiculous, often both at once, and everywhere in between.” While studying at the Paris Conservatory with Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud, Milhaud introduced him to author-lyricist and fellow American, **Arnold Weinstein** (b. 1940). For 45 years, Weinstein and Bolcom collaborated on several projects including Bolcom/Weinstein Cabaret Songs, Vols.1-4.



Arnold Weinstein
(b. 1940)

Arnold Weinstein is an award-winning author and currently the Edna and Richard Salomon Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Brown University. Weinstein considers his text for the cabaret songs to be complete plays unto themselves. He describes the text as an “elusive form of theater-poetry-Lieder- pop-tavernacular-prayer...The scene is the piano, the cast is the singer.” Despite the dark nature of the stories, Weinstein and Bolcom retain a sense of levity and satire. Bolcom wrote the songs for his wife, Grammy Award-winning singer Joan Morris, who also contributed ideas to the pieces.

“George” is the last song in Volume 2 of the Cabaret Songs published in 1981. This song tells the story of the life and death of a kind-hearted drag queen that loved to sing. Bolcom uses intentional musical plagiarism as he quotes Irving Berlin’s “A Pretty Girl is like a Melody” in the opening line, “Oh Call me Georgia, hon.” Puccini’s “Un bel di vedremo” from *Madame Butterfly* is quoted as the last song George sang before his murder.

George

My friend George used to say
“Oh Call me Georgia hon, get yourself a drink.”
And sang the best soprano in our part of town.
In beads, brocade, and pins he sang if you happened in
Through the door and he never locked and said,
“Get yourself a drink”
And sang out loud til tears fell in the cognac
And the chocolate milk and gin and on the beads, brocade, and pins
When strangers happened through his open door,
George said, “Stay, but you gotta keep quiet while I sing
And then a minute after and call me Georgia.”
One fine day a stranger in a suit of navy blue
Took Georgia’s life with a knife
George had placed beside an apple pie he baked
And stabbed in him the middle of “Un bel di vedremo”
As he sang for this particular stranger
Who was in the United States Navy
The funeral was at the cocktail hour.
We know George would do it like that.
Tears fell on the beads, brocade and pins in the coffin
Which was white because George was a virgin.
Oh call him Georgia hon, get yourself a drink
“You can call me Georgia, hon get yourself a drink!”

The story behind the “Song of Black Max (as Told by the de Kooning Boys)” was recited to Weinstein by Dutch-American abstract expressionist painter William de Kooning and his brother. Black Max was an urban legend in the Netherlands in the 1920’s. Weinstein said much of his text is verbatim from de Kooning. Bolcom’s setting cleverly integrates the music and text.

The main theme in piano is meant to be in strict time and unrelenting as it represents Black Max, a metaphor for death stalking us all. In the middle section, the singer transitions into speech for a brief monologue. This was a common practice in historical cabarets. Text-painting is found in the piano as it mimics the sounds of an organ-grinder, train, and harmonica. America's national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is quoted in a deconstructed, syncopated form in the right hand of the piano as the singer refers to "the good ol' USA." Despite the interaction between the voice and piano, the piano maintains independence and is deceptively tricky.

Song of Black Max (As Told by the de Kooning Boys)

He was always dressed in black
Long black jacket, broad black hat
Sometimes a cape
And as thin, and as thin as rubber tape:
Black Max

He would raise that big black hat
To the big shots of the town
Who raised their hats right back
Never knew they were bowing to
Black Max

I'm talking about night in Rotterdam
When the right night people of all the town
Would find what they could
In the night neighborhood of
Black Max

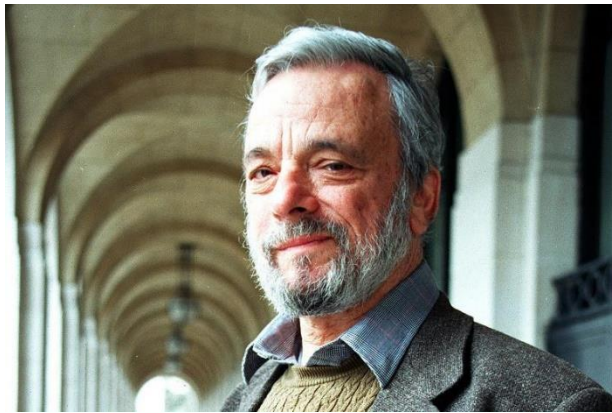
There were women in the windows
With bodies for sale
Dressed in curls like little girls
In little dollhouse jails
When the women walked the street
With the beds upon their backs
Who was lifting up his brim to them?
Black Max!

And there were looks for sale
The art of the smile --
(Only certain people walked that mystery mile:
Artists, charlatans, vaudevillians
Men of mathematics, acrobatics and civilians)
There was knitting-needle music
From a lady organ-grinder
With all her sons behind her
Marco, Vito, Benno

(Was he strong! Though he walked like a woman)
And Carlo, who was five
He must be still alive!

Ah, poor Marco had the syph, and if
You didn't take the terrible cure those days
You went crazy and died and he did
And at the coffin
Before they closed the lid
Who raised his lid?
Black Max!

I was climbing on the train
One day going far away
To the good old U.S.A
When I heard some music
Underneath the tracks
Standing there beneath the bridge
Long black jacket, broad black hat
Playing the harmonica, one hand free
To lift that hat to me:
Black Max
Black Max
Black Max



Stephen Sondheim
(1930-2021)

Last fall at the age of 95, **Stephen Sondheim** (1930-2021) passed away. In his obituary the New York Times described him as, “one of Broadway history’s songwriting titans, whose music and lyrics raised and reset the artistic standard for the American stage musical.” Beyond musical and critical success, Sondheim was a legendary mentor and teacher. His music, lyrics, and life leave a legacy of tremendous humanity.

As a teenager, Sondheim was lucky enough to have Oscar Hammerstein as a family friend who mentored the young composer. He also studied composition with Milton Babbitt. At

26, Sondheim wrote the lyrics for Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*. Some of his most well-known Broadway shows include *Company* (1970), *A Little Night Music* (1973), *Sweeney Todd* (1979), *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984), and *Into the Woods* (1987).

Unlike the pre-1965 Golden Age musicals, Sondheim's work dealt with themes of isolation, emotional honesty, loss, self-doubt, and the complexity of human nature. While his shows are enjoyed by a variety of audiences, his music is full of chromaticism, mixed meter, shifting tonalities, syncopations, and layered motifs.

"Send in the Clowns" is from *A Little Night Music*. The phrase, send in the clowns, comes from the theater. If a show is going badly – send in the clowns – to make the audience laugh and distract from the show's failure. In *A Little Night Music* Desirée is an aging actress who attempts to rekindle a romance with Fredrik, a man who once proposed to her and she rejected. However, this time he rejects her, as he is now engaged to a very young woman. Desirée is bitter, full of regret and anger. The first four strophes are sung to Fredrik, he exits during the piano interlude, the last strophe is directed to herself.

Send In the Clowns

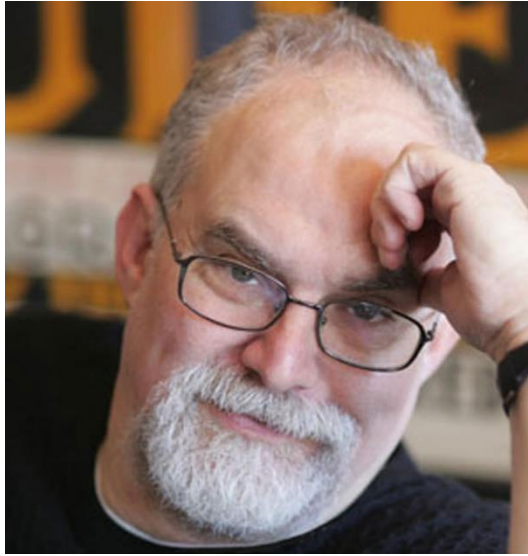
Isn't it rich?
Are we a pair?
Me here at last on the ground
You in mid-air
Send in the clowns

Isn't it bliss?
Don't you approve?
One who keeps tearing around
One who can't move
Where are the clowns?
Send in the clowns

Just when I stopped
Opening doors
Finally knowing the one that I wanted was yours
Making my entrance again with my usual flair
Sure of my lines
No one is there

Don't you love a farce?
My fault, I fear
I thought that you'd want what I want
Sorry my dear
But where are the clowns?
Send in the clowns
Don't bother they're here

Isn't it rich?
Isn't it queer?
Losing my timing this late
In my career
Where are the clowns?
There ought to be clowns
Well, maybe next year



William Finn
(b. 1952)

William Finn (b.1952) is a Tony award winning composer, lyricist, writer, and currently teaches graduate masterclasses in music theater writing for The Tisch School at New York University (NYU). His most popular musicals *Falsettos* and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* are known for their catchy tunes and witty comedic lyrics.

While *Falsettos* is full of wit and comedy, the show deals with heavier topics such as struggles amongst the gay and Jewish communities as well as universal themes of love, sickness, and loss. *Falsettos* is a two act, sung-through musical. Each act is based on a different book (written by Finn): *March of the Falsettos* and *Falsettoland*.

Act I (*March of the Falsettos*) takes place in 1979. Marvin has left his wife Trina for his male lover Whizzer. Marvin and Trina have a twelve-year old son who is trying to navigate the new family dynamic and structure. “I’m Breaking Down” takes place in Act I as Trina struggles to accept her new reality and fears that her family role will soon be taken over by Whizzer.

I’m Breaking Down

I'd like to be a princess on a throne
To have a country I can call my own
And a king who's lusty and requires a fling with a female thing

Great! Men will be men
Let me turn on the gas
I caught them in the den
With Marvin grabbing Whizzer's ass!
Oh sure, I'm sure, he's sure He did his best
I mean he meant to be what he was not
The things he was are things which I forgot
He's a queen, I'm a queen! Where is my crown?
I'm breaking down, I'm breaking down!
My life is shitty and my kid seems like an idiot to me!
I mean that's sick, I mean he's great!
It's me who is the matter talking madder than the maddest hatter!
If I repeat one more word, I swear I'll lose my brain!
Ohhh, what else should I explain?
Oh yes it's true! I can cry on cue! But so can you
I'm breaking down, I'm breaking down! Down, down!
You ask me is it fun to cry over nothing?
It is! I'm breaking down
Now let's consider what I might do next
I hate admitting I've become perplexed
I'm bereaved. I've cried, I've shook
I've yelled! I've heaved
I have been deceived!
As enemies go, Whizzer is not so bad
It's just he's so damn happy
That it makes me so damn mad!
I wanna hate him, but I really can't
It's like a nightmare how this all proceeds
I hope that Whizzer don't fulfill his needs!
Don't is wrong, sing along! What was the noun?
I'm breakin' down. I'm breaking down
I'll soon redecorate these stalls! I'd like some patting in the walls
And also pills. I wanna sleep!
Sure, things will probably worsen but it's not like I'm some healthy person
I've rethought my talks with Marv
And one fact does emerge
Oh, I think I like his shrink
So that is why I might turn to drink!
I'm on the brink of breaking down
I'm breaking down! Down! down!
I only want to love a man who can love me
Or like me, Or help me, Help me!
Marvin was never mine!
He took his meetings in the boy's latrine
I used to cry. He'd make a scene!
I'd rather die than dry clean Marvin's wedding gown!

I'm breaking down! I'm breaking down!
It's so upsetting when I found that what's rectangular is round
I mean, it stinks! I mean, he's queer
And me, I'm just a freak who needs it maybe every other week
I've rethought the fun we had and one fact does emerge
I played the foolish clown
The almost virgin who sings this dirge
Is on the verge of breaking down!
I'm breaking down! Down, down!
The only thing that's breaking up is my family
The only thing that's breaking up is my family!
But me, I'm breaking down!