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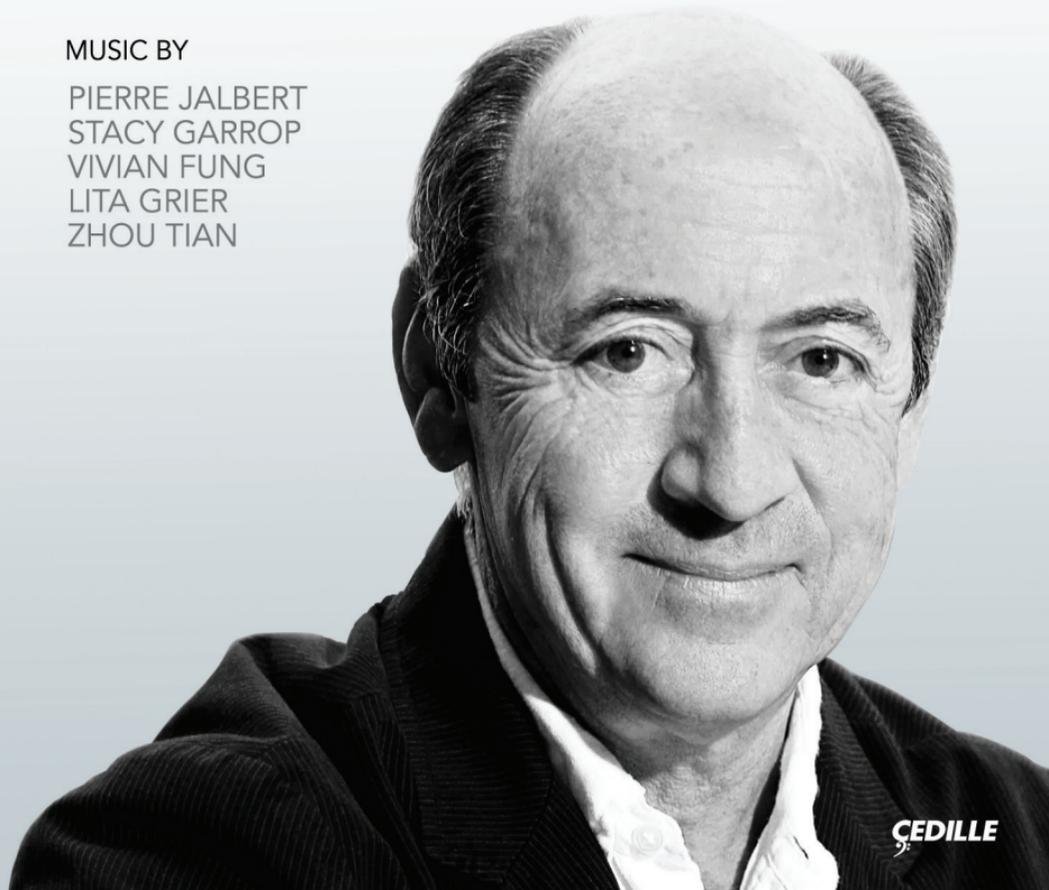
—The Strad

## THE BILLY COLLINS SUITE

SONGS INSPIRED BY HIS POETRY

MUSIC BY

PIERRE JALBERT  
STACY GARROP  
VIVIAN FUNG  
LITA GRIER  
ZHOU TIAN



CEDILLE

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"Forgetfulness" and "Dancing Towards Bethlehem" ©2008 Lita Grier

"Reading an Anthology of Chinese Poems of the Sung Dynasty, I Pause to Admire the Length and Clarity of Their Titles" ©2008 Zhou Tian

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## THE BILLY COLLINS SUITE

*Songs Inspired by his Poetry*

*World Premiere Recording*

- 1 Pierre Jalbert (b. 1967)  
The Invention of the Saxophone  
(12:17)  
Susan Cook, saxophone  
Yoko Yamada-Selvaggio, piano  
Steve Robinson, narrator

Stacy Garrop (b. 1969)  
*Ars Poetica* (15:49)

- 2 I. Introduction to Poetry (5:51)  
3 II. Sonnet (2:01)  
4 III. Vade Mecum (2:30)  
5 IV. Endangered (5:17)  
Buffy Baggott, mezzo-soprano  
Lincoln Trio  
Desirée Ruhstrat, violin  
David Cunliffe, cello  
Marta Aznavorian, piano

Total Time: (54:45)

Vivian Fung (b. 1975)

- 6 Insomnia (3:59)  
7 The Man in the Moon (3:25)  
8 The Willies (3:19)  
John Bruce Yeh, clarinet  
David Cunliffe, cello  
Marta Aznavoorian, piano  
Steve Robinson, narrator

Lita Grier (b. 1937)

- 9 Forgetfulness (5:33)  
10 Dancing Towards Bethlehem (3:30)  
Jonathan Beyer, baritone  
John Bruce Yeh, clarinet  
John Goodwin, piano

- 11 Zhou Tian (b. 1981)  
Reading an Anthology of Chinese  
Poems of the Sung Dynasty, I Pause  
To Admire the Length and Clarity of  
Their Titles (6:09)  
Tim Munro, flute  
Joel Link, viola  
Nuiko Wadden, harp  
Steve Robinson, narrator

## THE BILLY COLLINS SUITE

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux

As it emerged in the Baroque period of the 17th and early 18th centuries, a suite was a set of instrumental pieces based on dance rhythms, all in the same key — creating a sense of unity — but varying widely in rhythm, tempo, and mood, providing marked contrasts from one movement to another. Among the best-known Baroque suites are the four Bach composed for chamber orchestra and those drawn from Handel's Water Music.

This suite, paying tribute to an American poet whose works have garnered critical acclaim and popular success, differs in two obvious ways from its predecessors. First, it incorporates the human voice; we'll hear a narrator, a mezzo-soprano, and a baritone. Second, the "movements" of the suite are by five different composers. Each of the compositions, moreover, could easily be performed on its own. Put together into a suite, however, they reveal profoundly different responses to provocative poetry, and invite us to reflect on how we respond to the poems and their varied musical interpretations.

The element of unity is provided by Collins's poetry; contrast is supplied by the composers' diverse styles and the way each "sets" the verses. The first, third, and fifth compositions involve a narrator, whose voice is sometimes isolated from, and sometimes combined with,

the musical lines. The second and fourth pieces are more traditionally structured as songs. In the narrated pieces, Collins's penchant for satire and comic one-liners is emphasized a bit more. In the songs, we experience perhaps more clearly not only the poet's wryness but also the strength of his feelings. As for key signatures, or tonal centers: these are less important in 21st-century music than they were to Bach and Handel, but many of our pieces, inspired by the nature of their verses, do relate to traditional tonality.

In a *New York Times* article, Cynthia Magriel Wetzler wrote, "Luring his readers into the poem with humor, Mr. Collins leads them unwittingly into deeper, more serious places, a kind of journey from the familiar or quirky to unexpected territory, sometimes tender, often profound." Mr. Collins himself has said: "Poetry is my cheap means of transportation. By the end of the poem the reader should be in a different place from where he started. I would like him to be slightly disoriented at the end, like I drove him outside of town at night and dropped him off in a cornfield." He doesn't like discussing his work, except for "its capacity to withstand discussion." But the poetry here doesn't have to withstand discussion: it's being reflected and commented upon by the music.

The entire project is the brainchild of Chicago's Music in the Loft chamber series and its founder, Fredda Hyman. It was underwritten by a board member, Dr. Peter Austin, who provided the funding to commission all five works that comprise the suite. Most of the series was performed at

Music in the Loft's Ninth annual Kleiner Benefit Concert in 2008, just prior to the recording sessions for this CD.

Opening the program, Pierre Jalbert's "The Invention of the Saxophone" starts with no music at all: the narrator recites the first eight lines of the poem as a spoken solo, noting the achievement of Adolphe Saxe, with an offhand reference to the medieval Danish historian, Saxo Grammaticus. Then, tentatively, out of dark silence, the first saxophone tones emerge, as though the world's first saxophonist is just beginning to explore the possibilities of his new instrument. In the saxophone's second measure, however, Jalbert establishes a three-note down-and-up motive, played in triplet rhythm, that will become a major thematic element of the piece.

This initial solo becomes a duo when the piano introduces its first theme, a rippling passage with chromatic intervals that also sound slightly tentative: how am I going to partner this new sonority? Now, for the first of several times, the pianist joins the narrator, repeating the keyboard passage until the lines of poetry are finished. In the piano we begin to discern rising three-note motives with dissonant clashes between right and left hands. The saxophone returns with a more sustained theme. It becomes a real melody for the first time. After the third stanza, the saxophone becomes more virtuosic, more assertive, more alive to the potential at her fingertips. The down-and-up triplet figure is heard again and again — sometimes very stretched out — as the piano continues its agitated

patterns. Both instruments build to a powerful, insistent climax; then the texture abruptly shifts from legato (smooth) to staccato (detached), and the piano part turns from runs to chords. The saxophone now has, in essence, an accompanied cadenza, showing off what she's discovered about the instrument. The piano continues frenetic runs and chords, using the keyboard's highest and lowest registers. A long fortissimo section is highlighted by furiously repeated saxophone patterns derived from the three-note motive. Then a retard, a softening, and sustained piano notes anchor the fourth stanza. The commentary from the saxophone seems to return us to the beginning, but this time the saxophone part is varied and elaborated: a lot has been learned. The piano's accompaniment to the final stanza is subdued. Taking his cue from Collins's verse, Jalbert "let[s] the music do the ascending." And so it does, with the saxophone's final statement ending high and faraway.

Collins's "The Invention of the Saxophone" is a somewhat whimsical reflection on an instrument with a characteristic timbre, mixed with nocturnal imagery and references to the Second Coming. The verses gathered into Stacy Garrop's group of four songs published under the title *Ars Poetica* are distinctly more personal. We'll hear two reflections — one painful, one humorous — on the nature of poetry itself; then a rueful love note; and finally a meditation on the fate of the earth. Garrop's music elaborates and illuminates these statements. Its effectiveness comes from sharp contrasts between lyricism and drama, from special sound effects on the three instruments, and from the demands made on the flexibility

and expressiveness of the voice. The singer must be at various times teacher, commentator, and victim in a quartet consisting almost equally of beauty and heartache.

“Introduction to Poetry” begins in melodic sweetness that leads to chaos. Led in by the instruments, the voice part becomes increasingly excited, overjoyed by the exuberant freedom of poetry. Garrop’s tempo marking at the line “waving at the author’s name on the shore” is “Extremely energized.” But the triumphant instrumental interlude that follows turns suddenly threatening: the academic types arrive. Piano octaves and buzzing string trills, later tremolos, usher the voice back in, her part marked “throaty, snarling.” Now her line features tritones — intervals of an augmented fourth whose presence creates agitation and unrest — leading to a scream on high A. In the song’s coda the singer reiterates the poem’s opening line, “I ask them to take a poem,” with the same vocal motives as at the beginning, but with the joy all gone.

To deal with an older form of poetry, the sonnet, Garrop chooses a more “retro” music style: diatonic, even jaunty. The musical texture becomes more complex as Collins ponders the requirements of “get[ting] Elizabethan.” Then at the “turn” — the sonnet’s last six lines — we have faster-paced musical lines and more chromatic intervals until the bright C Major of the opening is restored on the final line, “come at last to bed.”

In “Vade Mecum” (Come with Me) an eerie opening atmosphere is induced via string harmonics: an effect produced by placing finger on

string lightly, without pressing down onto the fingerboard, and drawing the bow lightly over the string. The sound is high-pitched, ethereal, and distant. Under these tones we hear emphatic repeated piano figures, while the singer’s detached notes enable us to envision the scissors, also represented by the strings, now playing staccato. The vocal part becomes more frenzied until the singer, at the end, gently accepts the idea of being part of “the book you always carry.” The instrumental postlude is once again frenzied, its repeated notes suggesting the idea of being pasted down.

“Endangered”: Muted violin and cello are heard over a portentous piano sound produced by striking the strings directly inside the instrument. These ominous sonorities introduce a singing voice that is at first almost monotone. The strings continue without vibrato while the pianist plays normally with a triple-meter “Minuet for the extinct animals.” A tonal center of G Minor gradually emerges; the strings’ mutes are removed but the dynamic remains soft. Major and minor modes are conflated as the animals move in and out of our view. The subdued ending poignantly evokes the emptiness of a barren earth.

Vivian Fung’s Collins trilogy uses explicit tone painting to create miniature comedy-dramas. The distinctive timbre of the clarinet is featured to make points and create moods. Unlike Garrop’s pieces, which echo the traditional genre of the song-cycle, Fung’s work is a three-act playlet in sound, akin to the words-and-music genre pioneered by Stravinsky in *L’Histoire du Soldat*.

Narrator and instruments are closely integrated in “Insomnia” — not an obvious topic for humor, but Collins brings inevitable smiles with his image of the frenetic tricycle-rider. Repeated tremolo-like figures for the instruments represent the agitation and futility of the sleepless speaker; the soft dynamic is a touch of irony, since the insomniac’s brain is shouting. A short clarinet passage of quarter notes and staccato eighth notes evokes pacing the floor. With dramatic glissandos (slides), clarinet and cello suddenly scream frustration. Then low piano octaves support the narrator again, while its chords underpin a virtuosic clarinet-cello dialogue. Fung suddenly changes gears, with very soft lightly-sketched patterns — the cellist playing in an unusually high register — as the speaker begins to hope he will at last find rest. And indeed, cello harmonics, a sustained clarinet tone, and a high keyboard postscript appear to bring repose.

As with Garrop’s “Endangered,” in “The Man in the Moon,” the pianist is first asked to strum the strings inside the instrument. Random-sounding notes for clarinet and cello combine with the odd piano timbre to set the stage for fright. This fear soon turns to acceptance and appreciation of the moon-face, as the poet’s ruminations on a sky-personality are represented by wandering up-and-down melodic patterns presented in close imitation (the pianist now playing normally). Sustained notes for clarinet and cello are contrasted with agitated, rhythmically complex keyboard figurations until we see the fully-risen moon and reach a musical climax just before the words “he looks like a young man who has fallen in love with the dark earth.” Over ongoing piano patterns, under the narrator’s voice, clarinet

and cello again enter a kind of dialogue: a theme of augmented intervals played almost canonically. After the poem’s final words, “He has just broken into song,” we hear that triumphant song, launched by these two instruments in unison, then slowly fading away as the pianist returns to strumming.

“The Willies” is all about instrumental sound effects. Several times the cello is asked to play pizzicato (plucking) and both cello and clarinet have eerie glissando passages. The narrator’s words are often broken up into short phrases by the instrumental commentary. A frequent component of the piano part is octave playing in the bass register: ominous, like the willies themselves. As the piano part becomes more complex, and all three instruments play staccato, the narrator describes the willies in almost-gory detail. The instrumental sound continues to intensify as the satirical underpinning of the poet’s intention becomes increasingly apparent. But don’t dismiss the feeling altogether: strong dynamic contrasts and stop-and-start playing lead to a fortissimo conclusion of outright agitation: after all, “The willies are the willies.”

The poignant poems Lita Grier chose for her part of The Billy Collins Suite are both about loss. The partly-diatonic, partly-chromatic melodies for the voice in “Forgetfulness” serve to emphasize the confusion of the singer as he loses his grip on both events and knowledge. The voice is often set in dialogue with the clarinet, which echoes and elaborates upon the singer’s motives, moving in close imitation with him. Meanwhile, the

piano part, initially serene, moves to passages of agitation, but eventually settles into a ruminative state enhanced by the alternation of duple and triple meters. The free rhythms in the voice part and the notes themselves, which don't establish a tonal center, indicate the off-again on-again aspect of the singer's memory; we hear a final resolution on an A major chord, but will we remember it?

In "Dancing Toward Bethlehem," the words suggest a dance rhythm, and Grier chooses a pleasantly nostalgic waltz. Whereas in "Forgetfulness" the voice part was sometimes reminiscent of operatic recitative, here it is more conventionally song-like: to use the opera analogy, this is the aria following the recitative. The clarinet inserts commentary over the chordal piano part. The steady pace becomes more inconsistent starting with "Just as the floor of the nineteenth century gave way," but the waltz rhythm is restored in the postlude, with the singer humming his melody in partnership with the clarinet while the pianist contributes a steady pace. The song concludes wistfully with a sweet little clarinet scale-cadenza.

Zhou Tian has noted the "sparse, imagistic words and dry sense of humor," plus the "great sense of delicacy and tenderness," in Collins's "Reading an Anthology..." In choosing the combination of flute, viola, and harp to join the narrator, he echoes the instrumentation of Debussy's famous Sonata with its distinctive sound-world and mood. The verses reveal an American poet, reared and grounded in Western literary traditions, reacting to the very different mindset of Chinese poetry.

We hear the narrator first, with no instruments around him; a plaintive flute theme gives a reply, and is joined softly by the harp and viola. The narrator's next entrances are precisely indicated over the corresponding instrumental passages. The flute's melodies, often pentatonic to evoke the Oriental imagery, are underpinned by faster-paced passages for the viola and rippling arpeggios for the harp. Flute and viola tremolos occasionally interrupt their other patterns. After the narrator describes one long Chinese poem title as "A beaded curtain brushing over my shoulders," there comes an extended instrumental passage where the texture changes: the harp part becomes more agitated and extends over a wider range, the flute and viola play staccato, and the tempo picks up. Then a richly melodic viola solo, a tiny cadenza for the flute, a viola passage played with the wood of the bow, and a tempo shift to Adagio introduce the stanza beginning "Ten Day of Spring Rain..." spoken over a more serene instrumental trio. The aim of poet and composer becomes clear in the final lines: to illuminate the idea of listening. The poem's final word, "listen," is emphasized by sustained flute tones, a soft viola tremolo, and the harp in its low register. The flute theme from the beginning is restated over a quiet, freely-paced tremolando passage for the harp and a viola texture alternating between tremolos and doubled notes. We have achieved understanding through listening.

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*Andrea Lamoreaux is music director of 98.7 WFMT, Chicago's classical experience*

## ☐ The Invention of the Saxophone

It was Adolph Sax, remember,  
not Saxo Grammaticus, who gets the ovation.  
And by the time he had brought all the components  
together — the serpentine shape, the single reed,  
the fit of the fingers,  
the upward tilt of the golden bell—  
it was already 1842, and one gets the feeling  
it was also very late at night.

There is something nocturnal about the sound,  
something literally horny,  
as some may have noticed on that historic date  
when the first odd notes wobbled out of his studio  
into the small, darkened town,

summoning the insomniacs (who were up  
waiting for the invention of jazz) to their windows,  
but leaving the sleepers undisturbed,  
even deepening and warming the waters of their dreams.

For this is not the valved instrument of waking,  
more the smoky voice of longing and loss,  
the porpoise cry of the subconscious.  
No one would ever think of blowing reveille  
on a tenor without irony.  
The men would only lie in their metal bunks,  
fingers twined behind their heads,  
afloat on pools of memory and desire.

And when the time has come to rouse the dead,  
you will not see Gabriel clipping an alto  
around his numinous neck.  
An angel playing the world's last song  
on a glistening saxophone might be enough  
to lift them back into the light of earth,  
but really no farther.

Once resurrected, they would only lie down  
in the long cemetery grass  
or lean alone against a lugubrious yew  
and let the music do the ascending—  
curling snakes charmed from their baskets—  
while they wait for the shrill trumpet solo,  
that will blow them all to kingdom come.

## ② Introduction To Poetry

I ask them to take a poem  
and hold it up to the light  
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem  
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room  
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to water-ski  
across the surface of a poem  
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do  
is tie the poem to a chair with rope  
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose  
to find out what it really means.

## ③ Sonnet

All we need is fourteen lines, well, thirteen now,  
and after this one just a dozen  
to launch a little ship on love's storm-tossed seas,  
then only ten more left like rows of beans.  
How easily it goes unless you get Elizabethan  
and insist the iambic bongos must be played  
and rhymes positioned at the ends of lines,  
one for every station of the cross.

But hang on here wile we make the turn  
into the final six where all will be resolved,  
where longing and heartache will find an end,  
where Laura will tell Petrarch to put down his pen,  
take off those crazy medieval tights,  
blow out the lights, and come at last to bed.

## ④ Vade Mecum

I want the scissors to be sharp  
and the table perfectly level  
when you cut me out of my life  
and paste me in that book you always carry.

## ⑤ Endangered

It is so quiet on the shore of this motionless lake  
you can hear the slow recessional of extinct animals  
as they leave through a door at the back of the world,  
disappearing like the verbs of a dead language:

the last troop of kangaroos hopping out of the picture,  
the ultimate paddling of ducks and pitying of turtledoves  
and, his bell tolling in the distance, the final goat.

## ⑥ Insomnia

Even though the house is deeply silent  
and the room, with no moon,  
is perfectly dark,  
even though the body is a sack of exhaustion  
inert on the bed,

someone inside me will not  
get off his tricycle,  
will not stop tracing the same tight circle  
on the same green threadbare carpet.

It makes no difference whether I lie  
staring at the ceiling  
or pace the living-room floor,  
he keeps on making his furious rounds,  
little pedaler in his frenzy,  
my own worst enemy, my oldest friend.

What is there to do but close my eyes  
and watch him circling the night,  
schoolboy in an ill-fitting jacket,  
leaning forward, his cap on backwards,  
wringing the handlebars,  
maintaining a certain speed?

Does anything exist at this hour  
in this nest of dark rooms  
but the spectacle of him  
and the hope that before dawn  
I can lift out some curious detail  
that will carry me off to sleep—  
the watch that encircles his pale wrist,  
the expandable band,  
the tiny hands that keep pointing this way and that.

## 7 The Man in the Moon

He used to frighten me in the nights of childhood,  
the wide adult face, enormous, stern, aloft.  
I could not imagine such loneliness, such coldness.

But tonight as I drive home over these hilly roads  
I see him sinking behind stands of winter trees  
And rising again to show his familiar face.

And when he comes into full view over open fields  
he looks like a young man who has fallen in love  
with the dark earth,

a pale bachelor, well-groomed and full of melancholy  
his round mouth open  
as if he had just broken into song.

## 8 The Willies

*"Public restrooms give me the willies" —ad for a disinfectant*

There is no known cure for them,  
unlike the heeby-jeebies  
or the shakes

which Russian vodka and a hot bath  
will smooth out.

The drifties can be licked,  
though the vapors often spell trouble.

The whips-and-jangles  
go away in time. So do the fantods.  
And good company will put the blues  
to flight

and do much to relieve the flips,  
the quivers and the screamies.

But the willies are another matter.

Anything can give them to you:  
electric chairs, raw meat, manta rays,  
public restrooms, a footprint,  
and every case of the willies  
is a bad one.

Some say flow with them, ride them out,  
but this is useless advice  
once you are in their grip.

There is no way to get on top  
of the willies. Valium  
is ineffective. Hospitals  
are not the answer.

Keeping still  
and emitting thin, evenly spaced  
waves of irony  
may help

but don't expect miracles:  
the willies are the willies.

## ⑨ Forgetfulness

The name of the author is the first to go  
followed obediently by the title, the plot,  
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel  
which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never even heard of,

as if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor  
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the brain,  
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses good-bye  
and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,  
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,

something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,  
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember  
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue,  
not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river  
whose name begins with an *L* as far as you can recall,  
well on your own way to oblivion where you will join those  
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a bicycle.

No wonder you rise in the middle of the night  
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.  
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drifted  
out of a love poem that you used to know by heart.

## ⑩ Dancing Toward Bethlehem

If there is only enough time in the final  
minutes of the twentieth century for one last dance  
I would like to be dancing it slowly with you,

say, in the ballroom of a seaside hotel.  
My palm would press into the small of your back  
as the past hundred years collapsed into a pile  
of mirrors or buttons or frivolous shoes,

just as the floor of the nineteenth century gave way  
and disappeared in a red cloud of brick dust.  
There will be no time to order another drink  
or worry about what was never said,

not with the orchestra sliding into the sea  
and all our attention devoted to humming  
whatever it was they were playing.

▣ **Reading an Anthology of Chinese Poems of the Sung Dynasty, I Pause to Admire the Length and Clarity of Their Titles**

It seems these poets have nothing  
up their ample sleeves  
they turn over so many cards so early,  
telling us before the first line  
whether it is wet or dry,  
night or day, the season the man is standing in,  
even how much he has had to drink.

Maybe it is autumn and he is looking at a sparrow.  
Maybe it is snowing on a town with a beautiful name.

“Viewing Peonies at the Temple of Good Fortune  
on a Cloudy Afternoon” is one of Sun Tung Po’s.  
“Dipping Water from the River and Simmering Tea”  
is another one, or just  
“On a Boat, Awake at Night.”

And Lu Yu takes the simple rice cake with  
“In a Boat on a Summer Evening  
I Heard the Cry of a Waterbird.  
It Was Very Sad and Seemed To Be Saying  
My Woman Is Cruel — Moved, I Wrote This Poem.”

There is no iron turnstile to push against here  
as with headings like “Vortex on a String,”  
“The Horn of Neurosis,” or whatever.  
No confusingly inscribed welcome mat to puzzle over.

Instead, “I Walk Out on a Summer Morning  
to the Sound of Birds and a Waterfall”  
is a beaded curtain brushing over my shoulders.

And “Ten Days of Spring Rain Have Kept Me Indoors”  
is a servant who shows me into the room  
where a poet with a thin beard  
is sitting on a mat with a jug of wine  
whispering something about clouds and cold wind,  
about sickness and the loss of friends.

How easy he has made it for me to enter here,  
to sit down in a corner;  
cross my legs like his, and listen.

## ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

**Vivian Fung** has emerged as one of the foremost composers of her generation. Her compositions have been commissioned and performed by important ensembles including the Seattle Symphony, San José Chamber Orchestra, Shanghai String Quartet, and Ying Quartet. Fung's music is available on the Telarc, Cedille, and Signpost labels.

Fung was born in Edmonton, Canada, in 1975 and earned her doctorate from The Juilliard School in 2002. She has increasingly embraced non-Classical influences, including jazz and non-Western sources such as folksongs from the minority regions of China and Indonesian gamelan music. She is currently on the faculty at Juilliard and is an associate composer of the Canadian Music Centre. For more information, please visit [www.vivianfung.net](http://www.vivianfung.net).

A composer creating music of great expressive power and masterful technical control, **Stacy Garrop** has received numerous awards, commissions, and grants, including the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Elaine Lebenbom Memorial Award, the Raymond and Beverly Sackler Music Composition Prize, two Barlow Endowment commissions, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's Harvey Gaul Competition, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's First Hearing Composition Competition. Her music is published by Theodore Presser Company and has been recorded by Cedille Records, Innova, and Equilibrium. She has attended residences at the Aspen Music Festival, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Banff Centre for the Arts, MacDowell Colony, Millay Colony, Ragdale Foundation,

Wellesley Composers Conference, and Yaddo, and has served as a composer-in-residence for Chicago's Music in the Loft chamber series. For more information please visit [www.garrop.com](http://www.garrop.com).

Born in New York, **Lita Grier** won early recognition as a composer. A graduate of Juilliard, she was awarded First Prize in the New York Philharmonic Young Composer's Contest at age sixteen. Her winning composition, *Three Episodes for Piano*, was performed at Carnegie Hall and later published by Carl Fischer, winning a citation from The Piano Quarterly as one of the ten best teaching works for piano published that year. Her teachers have included Peter Mennin at Juilliard, Lukas Foss at Tanglewood and Roy Harris at U.C.L.A., where she received a Master's degree and an Atwater Kent prize in composition before setting aside composition in 1964.

Following a varied career in the music profession — writing, teaching, artist management, public relations and most recently producer of the Vienna Philharmonic and Salzburg Festival US radio broadcasts — her unprecedented successful return to composition after and 30 years' absence has seen a fresh stream of new works commissioned by and for many of Chicago's premier music organizations and artists including, most prominently, the Ravinia Festival, with four commissions in the past five years. Named a Chicagoan of the Year in 2005 by the *Chicago Tribune* for her dual achievements in composition and broadcasting, Lita's unusual musical journey has been featured on PBS station WTTW's ArtBeat Chicago and in numerous newspaper and magazine feature articles.

**Pierre Jalbert** is one of the most highly regarded American composers of his generation, earning widespread notice for his richly colored and superbly crafted scores. Jalbert has developed a musical language that is engaging, expressive, and deeply personal. Among his many honors are the Rome Prize, the BBC Masterprize, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's 2007 Stoeger Award, given biennially "in recognition of significant contributions to the chamber music repertory."

His music has been performed worldwide, with four Carnegie Hall performances of his orchestral music including the Houston Symphony's Carnegie Hall premiere of his orchestral work, *big sky*, in 2006. He has served as Composer-in-Residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (2002–2005), California Symphony (1999–2002), and Chicago's Music in the Loft chamber music series (2003). Select commissions and performances include those by the Ying, Borromeo, Maia, Enso, Chiara, and Escher String Quartets (the Escher Quartet recently performed his *Icefield Sonnets* at the Louvre in Paris); violinist Midori; and the symphony orchestras of London, Budapest, Seattle, Houston, Fort Worth, Colorado, and Albany, among others. Jalbert is Associate Professor at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music in Houston. He also serves as one of the artistic directors of Musiqa, a Houston-based contemporary chamber ensemble. Current projects include works for the Emerson String Quartet and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. For more information, please visit [www.pierrejaltbert.com](http://www.pierrejaltbert.com).

**Zhou Tian**, a native of China, is an award-winning young composer whose music has been performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony, Minnesota

Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, St. Cloud Symphony, Curtis Symphony, Guangzhou Symphony, Arditti Quartet, and Tanglewood Festival Chorus. Zhou earned music degrees from both Curtis and Juilliard, is a first-prize winner of the Washington International Composers Competition, and a three-time winner of the ASCAP/Morton Gould Young Composer Award. Zhou's compositions have received multiple performances in prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York, and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. In 2008, the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra led by Daniel Meyer performed Zhou's work in four major cities during the orchestra's first China Tour. His newest CD, *Symphonic Suite: The Grand Canal*, was recorded by the Guangzhou Symphony and released in 2009 by Pacific Audio & Video, China's largest recording label. Zhou's recent premieres include *First Sight*, commissioned and premiered by the Minnesota Orchestra under Sarah Hicks, and *Blowing Westward*, premiered by award-winning percussionist Pius Cheung at Carnegie Hall's Zankel Hall. For more information, please visit [www.zhoutian.org](http://www.zhoutian.org).

## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

California native **Buffy Baggott** has gained recognition throughout the US as an accomplished and versatile mezzo-soprano. She is an alumnus of the prestigious Lyric Opera Center for American Artists (now known as the Ryan Opera Center) and has appeared numerous times on Lyric Opera of Chicago's stage, including as *Carmen* (*Carmen*), *Stephano* (*Roméo et Juliette*), *Dryade* (*Ariadne auf Naxos*), *Siegrune* (*Die Walküre*), and as

three different characters — The Dresser, Schoolboy, and Groom — in Lulu.

Other roles include Schwertleite (Ring Cycle), Sonyetka (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Flora (*La Traviata*) and Maddalena (*Rigoletto*) for the Canadian Opera, Mrs. Lovett (*Sweeney Todd*) for Arizona Opera, Flosshilde (*Das Rheingold*) for San Francisco Opera, Flosshilde (*Das Rheingold*) for Indianapolis Opera, Cherubino (*Le nozze di Figaro*) for Hawaii Opera, Siegrune (*Die Walküre*) for Los Angeles Opera, and Baroness von Botzenheim in Robert Kurka's *The Good Soldier Schweik* for Chicago Opera Theater, which role she performs on Cedille Records' world premiere recording (Cedille catalog number CDR 90000 062). Ms. Baggott also serves as a vocal instructor in residence at the Bay View Music Festival in northern Michigan.

Baritone **Jonathan Beyer** has performed with notable opera companies and institutions including Pittsburgh Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, Fort Worth Opera, Opera Santa Barbara, Dallas Opera, Austin Lyric Opera, Opera Grand Rapids, The Chautauqua Institution, Tanglewood Music Center, Accademia Verdiana, and Teatro di Verdi. He has also appeared with the Chicago, Pittsburgh, Indianapolis, Baton Rouge, and Vermont Symphonies, Lorin Maazel's Châteaueville Foundation, Chatam Baroque, the Erie Philharmonic and the Festival at Aix-en-Provence.

Mr. Beyer was a National Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Competition. He was the 1st Place Winner at the Marian Anderson Prize for Emerging Classical Artists and has also won the Irma M. Cooper Competition, Violetta DuPont Competition, Pittsburgh Concert Society

Auditions, American Opera Society Competition, Union League Civic and Arts Foundation Competition, and at the Bel Canto Foundation. He has also received awards from the Gerda Lissner Foundation, Jensen Foundation, Solti Foundation, Charles Lynam Competition, Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation, National Opera Association, Anna Sosenko Foundation, Mario Lanza Foundation, Dresden Opera, National Association of Teachers of Singing, Giulio Gari Foundation, Palm Beach Opera, Jose Iturbi Foundation, and Neue Stimmen competitions.

An avid recitalist, Mr. Beyer has given concerts through the Vocal Arts Society, Marilyn Horne Foundation, Chicago Cultural Center, Judith Raskin Foundation, Bretlesmann Foundation, Over the Rainbow Foundation, and Marian Anderson Foundation. He has degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University.

**Susan Cook** received her Bachelors of Music degree from Bowling Green State University, Masters of Music from Northwestern, and Premier Prix du Saxophone from the National Conservatory of Bordeaux, France. She has performed with the Hamilton Symphony Orchestra, Canadian Opera Company (Toronto), Grant Park Orchestra, Elgin Symphony, KLANG, and Chicago Arts Players, and has been a featured soloist with the Houston Symphony, University of Saskatchewan Wind Ensemble, and Bowling Green Philharmonia.

Ms. Cook has toured with the International Saxophone Ensemble of Bordeaux and premiered works by John Cage, Lou Harrison, Marilyn Shrude, Janice Misurell-Mitchell, Sebastian Huydts, Evan Chambers, and others. Her prizes include: Grand Award winner at the Canadian National

Music Competition a Liberace Foundation Scholarship at Northwestern University, and a Canada Council Grant. Currently a member of the faculty at DePaul University in Chicago, Ms. Cook has recorded for the Quantum, Vandenburg, and Mode record labels.

**John Goodwin** is Principal Pianist/Resident Conductor of the Chicago Children's Choir. He also works with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Roosevelt University Chorus and is Music Director of the Park Ridge Orchestra Chorus. He has performed around the world and is in great demand as a recitalist, chamber musician, and collaborative artist.

An exceptionally gifted young artist, violist **Joel Link** was the First Place and Chamber Prize winner at the 2004 Yehudi Menuhin International Competition in London. In 2003, Joel's chamber ensemble, the Ottava String Trio, won the Gold Medal at the 30th annual Fischhoff National Chamber Music Competition. In 2005, Joel entered the Curtis Institute of Music, where he studies with Pamela Frank and Joseph Silverstein. He attended the Steans Institute for Young Artists at the Ravinia Festival in 2009 and is scheduled to participate at the Marlboro Music Festival in 2010.

Born in Brisbane, Australia, flutist **Tim Munro** is a member of the contemporary chamber music ensemble, eighth blackbird. He studied flute at Oberlin College, Queensland Conservatorium (Australia), and the Australian National Academy of Music. His teachers included Michel Debost, Margaret Crawford and Patrick Nolan.

Tim has played with professional orchestras, chamber groups, and new music ensembles around Australia. Highlights include concerto

performances with the Queensland Orchestra, solo performances at the Melbourne Arts Festival and Bangalow Festival, and recordings for Australian radio and commercial CD release. He has also participated in Carnegie Hall Training Workshops and the Pacific Music Festival. Composers he has worked with include Elliott Carter, Oliver Knussen, Aaron Jay Kernis, Joseph Schwantner, Tania Leon, Peter Sculthorpe, and Brett Dean.

Narrator **Steve Robinson** is a 35-year radio veteran and Senior Vice President for the WFMT Radio Network. In addition to overseeing the day-to-day operations of the station and the network, he is active in all levels of programming, outreach, development, and fundraising. His innovative programming has been recognized by ASCAP, which awarded him the 2003 Deems Taylor Award for his contributions to and support of excellence in radio programming.

Formed in 2002, the **Lincoln Trio**, ensemble in residence at the Music Institute of Chicago, has emerged as one of Chicago's most celebrated chamber groups. Their crafted balance of repertoire and presentation has allowed them to win over sophisticated audiences, younger admirers of the Trio's contemporary programs, and students discovering chamber music for the first time.

The Lincoln Trio is a frequent guest of Chicago's Music in the Loft series and WFMT Radio. The Trio has performed throughout the U.S., most recently as guest artists of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra's Beethoven Chamber Music Series. A champion of new music, the Lincoln Trio has performed numerous compositions written especially

for them including premieres of seven works by members of the Chicago Composers Consortium and “Moon Jig,” by former Chicago Symphony Orchestra composer-in-residence, Augusta Read Thomas.

Each member of the Trio is a musician of international renown. Violinist **Desiree Ruhstrat** has performed throughout the U.S. and Europe, appearing at the White House and performing on a live broadcast heard around the world with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. Cellist **David Cunliffe** has performed with the BBC and Royal Scottish Orchestras as well as touring around the world as a member of the Balanescu Quartet. Pianist **Marta Aznavoorian** has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and performed at the Kennedy Center and the Sydney Opera House.

**Nuiko Wadden** is principal harpist of the Pittsburgh Opera, and also a member of the Des Moines Metro Opera, Janus Trio, and International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE). Additionally, she serves as a substitute for the Houston, Milwaukee, and Minnesota Orchestras, and for the Houston Grand Opera and Ballet.

Ms. Wadden has been a prizewinner in numerous competitions including the 2005 Minnesota Orchestra Competition (WAMSO). She has been recognized in the Ann Adams, ASTA, American Harp Society, and Houston Tuesday Music Club competitions. As a soloist, she has appeared with the Skokie Valley Symphony, Oberlin Orchestra, and Shepherd School Chamber Orchestra. Originally from Chicago, she has performed on several local chamber music series including the Orpheus Young Artists

series and Music in the Loft, as well as on numerous live broadcasts from Chicago classical musical station WFMT.

Clarinetist **John Bruce Yeh** joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1977 and currently serves as Acting Principal Clarinet. He is Director of the Grammy Award-winning Chicago Pro Musica, as well as a founding member of the innovative quartet, Birds and Phoenix. A prizewinner at both the 1982 Munich International Music Competition and the 1985 Naumburg Clarinet Competition in New York, John’s recordings of concertos by Nielsen, Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Gould, Bernstein, Shaw, and others have won universal acclaim. He continues to appear as a soloist with orchestras, and on festivals and chamber music series worldwide. This is his sixth recording for Cedille Records.

A collaborating pianist the Chicago area, **Yoko Yamada-Selvaggio** was born in Hamamatsu, Japan, and holds degrees in piano performance from the Toho Gakuen School of Music and New England Conservatory. She has appeared on WGBH in Boston and WFMT in Chicago. She performs as a collaborator with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, professors at Northwestern University, and other noted Chicago-area musicians. She has appeared in concerts throughout the United States, Europe, and Japan, and has performed in over 300 works for brass and woodwind.