

O-PAW-RA NIGHT!

Texts & Translations

Saturday, January 11th, 2025 | 8pm | Mendelssohns Bar | Portland, OR

“Bored Cat Duet”, from *Meow and Forever* | Jodi Goble, composer & Basil Considine, librettist

CHESTER: Bored, I’m really bored.

NALA: Really bored

BOTH: Deep as the sea is our ennui.

C: So we weep recklessly

N: fecklessly. So we weep endlessly,

C: friendlessly.

BOTH: So we weep.

C: Ev’ryday, the same routine

N: The bowl is full, the bowl is empty.

C: She takes the bag, she leaves with the phone,

N: she leaves us alone

C: alone.

BOTH: The sunlight crawls and we follow.

N: We peer through the glass...

C: It’s a bird!

N: It’s a bug!

C: Where?

N: I don’t know!

C: ...it’s just lint on the rug.

BOTH: How long, cruel world, how long?

C: I feel hunger.

N: I feel thirst.

C: This water is stale.

N: This food is dry.

BOTH: I am unfed, I am unloved. I have no cardboard box. I have no box. Where is my cardboard box? Where is my box?

C: Now I’m really bored.

N: Really bored.

BOTH: Deep as the sea is our ennui...

“Siren Snarl,” from *Sirens vs. Amazons* | Jodi Goble, composer & Basil Considine, librettist

Unbelievable! Inexcusable!

Just plain *mean*! Ah!!

Let them look for me,

They’ll never run me to the ground

If I don’t want to be found

He was so handsome.

His face was...nice

Profile like the pile of coins

in a king’s ransom

And a brow like a vow...I mean, *wow*...

Paint it in oil, carve it marble,

chisel it in ice!

All this to say that in my day, I *may* have nipped at a lip, or a hip, given thigh a try, snapped off a leg...or five.

Once or twice, they were still alive...

And in time after I’d had my fill of kisses, well, he *was* nutritious,

and would have been delicious...

Was he my lover? Was he my food?

I’ll never know, ‘cause they were so rude!

They just assumed, that they could

consume him!

And he was *mine*. He was the only thing I wanted for my own.

And now he’s nothing but bones.

“Sisters stick together,” so they say.

“Sisters support, they don’t betray.”

But instead, those bitches at my lover!

I’ll make them pay!

The-Man-in-the-Mune | Thea Musgrave, composer & Maurice Lindsay, poet

The man-in-the-mune's got
cleik-i-the-back
An he wull-na come oot tae play,
He sits by himsel on a
shimmer o heaven,
An hears whit the starnies say,
But his cheeks gae black,
he purls his broo,
an his auld heid shaks wi' rage
Thru the reengan clouds that
jostle the yirth,
whan God's on the rampage.
The man-in-the-mune's got
cleik-i-the-back,
An he wullna come oot tae play.

The man in the moon's got
a crick in his back,
So he will not come out to play
He sits by himself on a
shimmer of heaven,
And hears what the stars say,
But his cheeks go black,
he furls his brow,
And his old head shakes with rage
Through the bustling clouds that
jostle the earth,
when God's on the rampage.
The man in the moon's got a
crick in his back,
And he will not come to play.

Noah's Ark | Lourens Abram Faul, composer & A.G. Visser, poet (trans. Henriët Fourie)

I. Die olifant (The Elephant)

Hierdie gomlastiekkalant
Met 'n stert aan elke kant,
Met sy turfvel kaal en skurf,
Met sy langslang van 'n slurf,
Is die
Olie-
rolie-
polie-
katjie-
poetjie-
olifant.

This rubbery fellow
With a tail at either side,
With its rough, bare hide,
With its long snake of a trunk,
Is the
Oly-
roly-
poly-
kitty-
ditty-
elephant.

II. Die renoster

Die droster met sy vaal karos,
Daar by die wag-'n-bietjie-bos,
Met die dik opnaaisels in sy huid,
Met 'n tandestoker op sy snuit -
Dit is mos
die Agteros-
sambok-
renosteros.

The wanderer with its drab wagon,
There by the thorny bush,
With the thick patches on its hide,
With a toothpick on its snout –
That is, of course,
the last oxen-
whip-
rhinoceros.



III. Die dromedaris

Die harige ou harlekyn,
Die Fordkar van die sandwoestyn,
Met 'n rolvat water in sy inventaris,
Wat nog altyd silwerskoon
en klaar is,
Is die
Kalaharie-
Sarie-
harie-
blikkanarie-
drome-
daris.

The hairy old harlequin,
The Ford car of the desert,
With a can of water in its inventory,
Which has always been sparkling clean
and ready,
Is the
Kalahari-
Sari-
hari-
tin canary-
drome-
dary.

IV. Die seekoei

Die ou vetsak wat
daar woedend brul,
Is die bitsige ou seekoeibul.
Wat sê u,
hooggeleerde Dominee?
Is dit 'n contradictio in terminiee?
O nee, ek weet hy is gedoop aldus:
Die
Hiep-hiep-hiep
hoerê-
po-
potamus.

The old fat bag that roars furiously,
Is the cranky old hippopotamus bull.
What do you say,
highly learned Minister?
Is this contradictory?
Oh no, I know he was baptized as
follows:
The
Hip-hip-hip
hooray-
po-
potamus.

V. Die kameelperd

Die ou langenekker op-en-af,
Met sy alkant-selfkant-draf,
Met sy klein verdwaalde koppie
In die hoogste boom se toppie,
Is ou
Veertien-
voet-
van-
seerkeel-
as-
hy-
keelseer-
kry-
giraf.

The old long-neck up-and-down,
With its awkward self-tilting trot,
With its little lost head
At the top of the tallest tree,
Is the old
Fourteen-
foot-
of-
sore-throat-
if-
it-
gets-
sore-throat-
giraffe.



VI. Ensovoorts

Daar's nog goed met
wreder name:
Kwaggas uit die Kraggakame,
Piering-pinang-rottang-blattjang-
oerangoetangs,
Middellandse-see-se-ruben-simeon-
leviatangs.
Kom jul môre oor 'n week weer,
dan miskien
Sal al die arkebroeders jul vir hul en hul
vir julle sien.

**“Vulnerability,” and “Stillness” from
The Dead Fires Anthology | Drew
Swatosh, music & lyrics**

I. Vulnerability

I breathe in, I breathe out
the weight of my soles grounds
through the earth,
my heart space opens anew,
wading through emotions
deep and complex,
with vulnerability flowing like tears,
“Find what feels good”
I breathe in, I breathe out

II. Stillness

Amid the stillness,
a wounded earth heals
Amid the stillness,
beginning anew.

There are more things with even more
cruel names:
Zebras from the Kraggakame,
Piering-pinang-rottang-blattjang-
orangutans,
Mediterranean-sea's-ruben-simon-
leviatans.
Come again tomorrow, or maybe next
week,
Then perhaps all the ark brothers will
see you, and you will see them.

**“You have Become a Forest,” from
Four Poems by Nikita Gill | Melissa
Dunphy, composer & Nikita Gill, poet**

One day when you wake up,
you will find that you
have become a forest.
You have grown roots and found
strength in them
that no one thought you had.
You have become stronger
and more beautiful,
full of life giving qualities.
You have learned to take all the
negativity around you
and turn it into oxygen
for easy breathing.
A host of wild creatures live inside you
and you call them stories.
A variety of beautiful birds rest inside
your mind and you call them memories.
You have become an incredible self
sustaining thing of epic proportions.
And you should be so proud of yourself,
of how far you have come
from the seeds of who you used to be.



“Asha’s Aria,” from *Meow and Forever* | Jodi Goble, composer & Basil Considine, librettist

Thirty-three Ginsburg,
this must be the place!
This is her street – her building.
Somewhere up there on the third floor,
she’s waiting for me.
I’ll climb the stairs, I’ll knock,
she’ll open the door,
and we will be together.

She’s brave and she’s smart,
she’s funny and kind,
maybe just a little bit...scattered.
But that’s O.K.
It’s only been a few,
but I feel like I know her.
Beautiful eyes, beautiful smile,
loves the same movies and music.
She’s fierce about
the things she believes in.
Her lip stain tastes like pineapple...

She’s perfect!
But no, no, Asha, no
no one is perfect.
You need to remember that.

I feel so strongly and it scares me.
I feel so strong
and it electrifies my soul!
Too strong, too fast.
It could go wrong, it might not last.

Slow down, Asha, slow down.

You know what dangers lie in store.
You know that you’ve been hurt before.
Don’t let this song repeat, Asha.
Can’t call this “love,”
you’ve only just met.
Barely a day, or a weekend or two.
You can’t call it “love”...yet.

Be strong, be wise.
Don’t get lost in your head.
Be aware, read the signs.
Don’t let fantasy blind your eyes.
Don’t fall, don’t fall. Slow down.

Don’t let the sweet taste of her lip stain
Linger on your mind

***Haven* | Lisa Neher, composer & Paulann Peterson, poet**

Come, Love, and rest
your sleep in me.
Let our two sleeps
slip back and forth between

our selves in a tide
rising—our breath
the night’s deep wave.
I will hurt nothing in you

as you eddy and surge,
as we swell, drift,
first into, then out of our
one body.

Only by the faint taste
of morning’s salt on our skin
will we know how far
we have been.



My Father's Voice | Dianne Davies,
composer & Paulann Peterson, poet

Caught on tape,
its dappled gleam
makes a brief but vivid swim
upstream through time,
through time.

Him long dead,
telling me his story, still a boy,
he's in a line of hired hands on
horseback
strung across the Montana river
Guiding their ponies
against the flow,
they drag,
drag a net behind them

Through snowmelt,
seining for fish,
They're men far from home,
miles from a rod, bot,
or the flat, deep water
fit for its launch

High country horsemen
with a yen for trout
sizzled crisp by bacon grease,
bubbling,
in a cast iron pan

I'm still that girl,
Hungry for her father's talk
on a minute of shining magnet tape,
on the widecast net,
lay longing.

**"What's That Smell?," from COVID
Bake-Off** | Monica Chew, composer &
Sandra Flores-Strand, librettist

EVE: Did it work?

LILLY: No.

EVE: Here, take some more.

LILLY: That's enough garlic, my stomach's
turning sour.

EVE: Sorry! Water?

LILLY: Yes.

EVE: I know this method that worked for my
friend, but I don't remember what it was.

LILLY: Eve, we're running out of time!

EVE: Ah ha! Here's a list. Lemon and honey?

LILLY: No.

EVE: Nose irrigation?

LILLY: No.

EVE: Eat crushed up ginger?

LILLY: No.

BOTH: What will it take to regain [your/my]
taste and sense of smell?

EVE: Fresh ground coffee?

LILLY: No.

EVE: Eat cayenne pepper?

LILLY: No.

EVE: Peppermint tea?

LILLY: No.

BOTH: What will it take to regain [your/my]
taste and sense of smell?

EVE: Cinnamon? Curry leaves? Castor
oil? Cardamom seeds?

LILLY: No! Wait...wait... YES! Just a minute...
There it is...

It's weak, but it's there!

BOTH: It's there!

Floral, fruity, tangy, sweet.

[Your/My] taste is back, we can compete.

Oh taste, oh smell, you're back again,

So we can win the prize!



“Camila’s Aria,” from *Pepito* | Nicolás Lell Benavides, composer & Marella Martin Koch, librettist

Hello, dog. My name is Camila.
My husband and I came here for a puppy,
but we could settle for the right dog.
Are you the right dog? Are you the one?
It’s important to know in advance.
It’s important to know in advance if you are the right dog.
There is nothing to gain from an imperfect match.
Trust me, I know, I have been wrong before.
Will you bark all night long? Pee inside?
Will you bite? Will you tear up the rug?
Chew on mulch? Do you drool?
It’s important to know in advance.
It’s important to know in advance if you are the right dog.
Are you the one?
Do you know how to fetch? Dig a hole? Can you sit?
Will you heel? Walk a child home from school?
Not now but in the future?
Look, are you the right dog?
Would you tell me if not?
Would you know? Would you even know?
Is there a right dog? How would I know?

Voël | Dirk De Klerk, composer & W.E.G. Louw (trans by Henriët Fourie)

'n Voël vlieg voor my venster verby,	A bird flies past my window
'n naalddun lyn wat daaroor gly	a needle thin line that glides across it
en die glas in twee vlakke sny;	and slits the glass into two panes;

Die wêrelde val apart en bly	the worlds fall apart and stay
elk in sy enkelheid geskei	separate in their uniqueness -
ek hierbinne, en daarbuite hy.	Me out there, him in here.



“A Pause” & “The First Spring Day”, from *Birth and Rebirth* | Joan Drewes, composer & Christina Rosetti, librettist

A Pause

They made a chamber sweet
with flower and leaves,
and the bed sweet with
flower on which I lay;
While my soul, love bound,
loitered on its way.
I did not hear the birds about the eaves,
nor hear the reapers talk
among the sheaves;
Only my soul kept watch
from day to day,
Kept watch from day to day
My thirsty soul,
kept watch for one away;
Perhaps he loves, though,
remembers, grieves.
At length there came a
step upon the stair,
upon the lock the old familiar hand:
Then first my spirit seemed
to scent the air of paradise;
Then first the tardy sand
of time ran golden
and I felt my hair put
on a glory and my soul expand.

The Frist Spring Day

I wonder if the sap is stirring yet
If wintry birds are dreaming of a mate,
If frozen snowdrops feel as yet the sun
and crocus fires
are kindling one by one.
Sing, robin, sing!
I still am sore in doubt
concerning Spring.
I wonder if the spring tide of this year
Will bring another Spring
both lost and dear;
If heart and spirit will
find out their Spring,
or if the world alone will
bud and sing.
Sing, hope to me;
Sweet notes, my hope,
soft notes for memory
The sap will surely quicken soon or late,
The tardiest bird will twitter to a mate;
So Spring must dawn
again with warmth and bloom,
or in this world or in the world to come;
Sing, voice of Spring.
Till I too blossom and rejoice and Sing

A Poem of Gratitude | Drew Swatosh, composer & Caroline Erdmann, poet

To whom it may concern
You have inspired me
To look beyond the greener pastures
To trust myself as I tumble over that old
rickety fence
Where things I can do meet the infinite
sky of possibility

To whom it may concern
You have motivated me
Callused toes squish
and bounce on melted grass

Thighs burning to run,
my ideas, next to me,

To whom it may concern
These past 13 years have not been in
vain
Rocks to trip me have come and gone
But you all have been there to pick me
up

Thank you



Duiwe (Doves) | Dirk De Klerk, composer & I.D. du Plessis (trans. Henriët Fourie)

Bali se singende duiwe
Omsingel die maan
in hul vlug
En hang, 'n tros
donkerblou druiwe,
Aan die hoë preeel
van die lug.

This Wound | Denise Knaack

This wound was almost healed until you
touched it today. And in a movement
concealed from others, with eyes, and
words, you played upon the stitches
I had so carefully sewn over the gash
you left in my heart.
But how could either of us have
known what pain would end or start?
This wound was dressed with time
and soothed by another's salve.
For so long I had not been inclined
to want what I could not have.
Though at times a very faint scar
would swell and show its line.
And I would treat it with denial
and say that it was fine! Until today
when we spoke not a word of the future.
I felt each word start to probe
and cut me searching for each suture.
It stretched and opened up the skin
and exposed the still infected tissue.
And though I know the pain within
I couldn't help but pursue the issue.
And so tonight while we're so far apart.
I sit in dire need. For where I thought
was only scar upon my heart.
I now find, once again, I bleed.

Baili's singing doves
Surround the moon
in their flight
and hang like a bunch
of
Dark blue grapes
On the high vine of the sky.

**"Learn Something for Me
(Grandmother)", from *gichi-
mookomaan-aki*** | Danielle Olana
Jagelski, composer & words from
members of the tribal nations

My Grandmother, left to care for them;
her parents,
she was like twelve years old.
The Native way,
Always, take care of your elders.

But, Grandmother said,
Said to me every day,
Always, you go,
Get up and every day,
Always, Always,
"Go learn something for me,
Go learn something for me,"

She said every day,
Always, Always,
you go, get up and every day,
Always, Always,
"Go learn something for me,
Go learn something for me."



“There is Frost,” from *Dead Fires Anthology* | Drew Swatosh, composer & Carolyn Quick, poet

There is frost upon the meadow now
Just as there’s always been
A silent shroud to let the silence out
Until the fear pulls it back in

The snows have melted since the rains came,
Crystalline dewdrops are forgetting their claims.
And the silken meadow on the valley floor
now refuses the loss of her name.

“There is only love,” from *Family Portraits* | Doug Davis, music & lyrics

There is only love.
There is only peace.
All things abide in love.
Let our love surround you.
Let our care enfold you.
Let us hold and comfort,
we who so dearly love you.
For within you
is the light of the world.

***Sekretarisvoël (Secretary Bird)* | Dirk De Klerk, composer & C.J. Leipoldt (trans. Henriët Fourie)**

Sekretarisvoël met jou lange bene,
Met jou penne agter jou ore styf,
Met jou stadige stappies,
wat maak jy hier?
Sekretarisvoël met jou lange bene,
Met jou vaalgrys vere
en lang, lang lyf,
Met jou groot, groot oë,
wat maak jy hier?

Secretary bird with your long legs
With your stiff pens behind the ears.
With your slow gait,
what are you doing here?
Secretary bird with your long legs,
With your pale grey feathers
and long, long body
With your big, big eyes,
what are you doing here?



Snake | Jake Heggie, composer
& Philip Littell, librettist

Snake, is it true
About the fruit?
My intuition
Tells me what you say about
This fruit
Is true.
I'd like to find out, snake.
I'd love to know.
Go ahead in front of me
Where I can see you.
I will follow you.

The snake is in the tree.
Where I cannot see him.
He is now the color of Shadows.
Very few things are
As visible as I am
When I'm clean.
When a thing is visible,
It always means that the thing,
The tree frog, or that fruit,
means to be seen.

Visibility's
A warning or
An invitation
And it never tells you
Which.
What's visible will either
Feed you,
Mate with you,
Or kill you.
Either way you gain
Experience.
Here goes.
Sweet. Sour. Salty. Bitter.
And the taste of air,
Of rottenness,
Earth,
And water.
Now I know.

How Doth the Little Crocodile? | Lisa
Neher, composer & Lewis Carroll, poet

How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!

How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in
With gently smiling jaws!



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