

announcing our new name -

BACH+BEETHOVEN EXPERIENCE

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chicago
stories
book one

notes from the directors

Dear BBE Family,

Thank you for joining us today for this first Chicago Stories program. We are thrilled to share this new annual project of all new music for period instruments with all of you!

These performances are the culmination of a process that began nearly a year ago when we asked ourselves, “What did Bach and Beethoven do when they composed their new music?” They wrote music for specific occasions and people. They often wrote for specific players and combinations of instruments. So, we figured that was a good place to start.

Chicago has way more to offer than its touristy side. It is incredibly diverse, with fascinating neighborhoods and a deep history. What better libretto could we have asked for than the people and neighborhoods of this city?

The result has been far greater, more fulfilling, and more impactful than we could have ever planned — and we plan BIG! We hope you are as impacted and deeply moved as we are, and that you’ll join us again for Chicago Stories 2018!

Warmest wishes,

thomas alan & brandi berry benson

“Chicago’s gift to the early music world”
— *Boston Classical Review*

THE NEWBERRY CONSORT



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Music of faith and longing from Renaissance Spain and the Ladino oral tradition of the Sephardic Jews

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Join the BBE this December 2017 for -

Carols

Some you know. Some you don't.

- December 15 :: 4th Presbyterian @ 12:10 PM
- December 17 :: Big Bricks @ 11 AM (Brunch!)
- December 18 :: Women's Club for Music @ 11 AM

chicago stories : book one

Chapter I: Journey to a Land of Refuge

Two Assyrian Songs
I. Iman
II. Ninos

Eric Malmquist
(b. 1985)

Chapter II: A Heritage Rebirthed

Three Songs based on selected poems
from “The Wailing Wall” by R. Castellanos

Amos Gillespie
(b. 1980)

- I. Soledad
- II. Como el mar ahogada
- III. La noche Caerá

Solo!

dedicated to the Alvarez Brothers

Chapter III: Ascent and Impact

Really

Heidi Joosten
(b. 1990)

Yes.

performers

Thomas Aláan, *countertenor*
Bill Baxtresser, *cornetto*
Brandi Berry, *Baroque violin*
Leighann Daihl Ragusa, *traverso*
Sung Lee, *Baroque oboe*

Alexandra Olsavsky, *soprano*
Laurd Osterlund, *alto recorder*
David Schrader, *harpsichord*
Anna Steinhoff, *viola da gamba*
Paul Von Hoff, *sackbut*

about the works

Two Assyrian Songs, by **Eric Malmquist**, conveys the experiences of two Assyrian immigrants that found refuge in Rogers Park and Lincolnwood. Each song is named for the person who offered their story. Song No. 1, *Iman*, is about the mother of Eric's friend, Enanna. For almost two hours, Iman shared with Eric the story of her escape from her home, Ankawa, in northern Iraq during the 1980s. She lived as a refugee in Iran and Syria, eventually coming to Chicago in the early 1990s. The song can be divided into three sections: 1) a solemn and slow opening, as Iman recounts the dangers of escaping Iraq; 2) a faster middle with active rhythmic patterns alluding to the anticipation of coming to the border; and 3) a return to the slower tempo, but with a more uplifting sound to convey the feelings of hope and encouragement as the police welcomed her to Iran. Song No. 2, *Ninos*, is based on a poem by the renowned Assyrian poet Ninos Nirari. Originally from Kirkuk in northern Iraq, he arrived in the US in the 1980s. He's lived in the northern suburbs of Chicago since his arrival. Ninos speaks a different dialect of Assyrian than Iman, which prompted Eric to learn more about the Assyrian alphabet and its Phoenician roots. In this piece, aside from the use of Assyrian, Eric drew inspiration from Assyrian pop artists like Linda George, considered to be the "Beyonce" of the Assyrians.

Amos Gillespie's *Three Songs* and *Solo!* are the culmination of his shared history with the Alvarez Brothers and their Latin Jazz Big Band Orchestra. Having played saxophone in their ensemble for the last 12 years, Amos has witnessed first hand a rich cultural and musical heritage struggling to stay alive in Pilsen. The Alvarez Brothers have a deep sense of pride in both reviving and preserving their heritage. Jamie Alvarez eloquently said, "*Music is an expression of the soul. It liberates us. Musica de Las Americas, our music, links us to our past and to our predecessors - tipica y tradicional.*" Amos draws from the style and beauty of the Latin jazz traditions in these pieces - with a sense of looking forward.

Three Songs expounds on a narrative of a culture transplanted, and feeling alone in a fight to survive and remain true to its roots. His instrumental piece, *Solo!*, weaves in and out of lyrical and rhythmically driving sections, like one would find in an early 17th century Baroque form. The rhythmic sections draw on the Latin ostinato (or repeating) rhythms. Minimalism gives a sense of pushing the tradition forward out of *tipica y tradicional*, and into a new renaissance revival of the style.

Heidi Joosten found many themes in common between the women she interviewed for her works: "The women in power that I spoke to were amazingly inspirational, but both of them work in fields where their progress has (or has had) the opportunity to be stalled by... a current administration who doesn't see eye to eye on the issues of poor people, people of color, and immigrants... Reach is my attempt at depicting that glass ceiling - the inability to totally succeed in your full capacity because of the systemic white patriarchy in place. The permeating [rapid] sixteenth notes represent the exhaustion of fighting the uphill daily battles [with] melodic/music materials... taken straight from two Bach partitas, albeit incomplete and often very, very twisted. These women's struggles have been created inside the constructs of a white system of power. The chaconne in the middle is a very different texture, with a soprano line being 'taught' how to conform... and stopping all attempts in order to be true to [herself]. The Da Capo (with encouraged embellishments) is the struggle to regain footing and still try to push ahead, while bending the rules. The form of the piece, [Yes], isn't very traditional. I wanted to see how well I could put together situations in a 'team meeting' and how the instruments would interact with each other that way. The vocal line is meant to be sung without words, on a comfortable vowel for the vocalist. [She will also be conducting portions of the piece] as she is the team leader both listening to her team as well as communicating the ideas she thinks are best."

translations

Three Songs (Gillespie)

Poetry from "The Wailing Wall," by Rosario Castellanos

I. Soledad

I am a child of my own making.
I was born from my dream. My dream sustains me.

Alone, alone.

Don't go looking for my springs anywhere but in my own blood.
And don't try to follow a river upstream back to my beginning.

Alone, alone.

In my family there is only one thing.

There is but one word, the word is:

'Loneliness.'

II. Como el mar ahogada

Thirsty as the sea and as the sea, drowned.
Of deep salt water, of deep salt water.

I come from the abyss to my lips
that are like the tentative attempt of a beach,
Like sand betrayed, like sand betrayed,

Crying for the flight of the waves.
Crying for the flight of the waves.

My sea is of white scarves
of desolate springs and the shipwrecked.
Of deep salt water, of deep salt water.

My beach is a snail that moans
because of the furious wind on its walls.
Thirsty as the sea and as the sea, drowned.
Like sand betrayed, like sand betrayed,

Crying for the flight of the waves.
Crying for the flight of the waves.

III. La noche Caerá

My passage will finish sooner than space.
Night will fall before my toil will end.
Wild animals will surround me in a maddened patrol,
my voices will be trimmed by sharpened knives,
the fetters which subdue fright will be smashed.
My enemy will not prevail against me
if I sing my song and dance my dance.

Two Assyrian Songs (Malmquist)

II. Ninos

Poem, "Rebirth," by Ninos Nirari

You who died with a flower in your hand,
it will light up and spread like a spark.
You who were born with shackles on your hands,
your shackles will give you freedom and good news.

The bells rang, our land was liberated,
the dream of warriors came true.
The stars above twinkled like a diamond,
the darkness of our eyes lifted.

They won't kill our land,
it will become a grave for terrorists and radicals.
Our history says the people will rise
and become a fence for our land's border.

In the new land there will be no blood or killing,
no governor to rule with fire and iron.
There will be kindness, freedom of speech,
equal rights and fraternity will be achieved.

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