

STANDING STILL : STILL STANDING

**THOUGHTS FROM A PANDEMIC ISOLATION
SET TO MUSIC**

POEMS BY REG HUSTON



**Commissioned and Performed by
Susanne Mentzer, *mezzo-soprano***
with

Matthew Worth, *baritone*

Kevin Korth, *piano**

Tammy Hall, *piano*

Friction Quartet*

Melissa Dufort, *mezzo-soprano**

Kody Thiessen, *bass**

**Thursday March 3 2022 at 7:30 PM
Barbro Osher Recital Hall**

Program

Sitting, Just Sitting (6/13/20)

Jake Heggie

The Great Fog (7/31/20)

Hilary Purrington

In the Silt Nearby (6/2/20)

Susanne Mentzer

Kevin Korth

The “US” Treasury (8/17/20)

Libby Larsen

Comb (6/2/2020)

Kurt Erickson

Matthew Worth

Kevin Korth

In the Wee Hours (5/15/2)

Karim Al-Zand

Glimpse Through the Fog (5/12/21)

Susanne Mentzer

Kevin Korth

Heaven’s Gaze (12/30/20)

Michael Ching

Matthew Worth

Kevin Korth

The Person in the Moon (12/31/20)

Michael Ching

Susanne Mentzer

Kevin Korth

Kody Thiessen*

Fill the Crescent Moon (9/27/21)

Tammy Hall

It’s all I want (4/11/21)

Susanne Mentzer

Tammy Hall

Kody Thiessen*

Pandemic Times Society Disorder (3/27/2021)
It's a Tough Time (11/16/20)

Andre Myers

Susanne Mentzer
Kevin Korth

-Intermission-

“All We Have”

Daron Hagen

The Great Fog (7/31/20)
It's a Tough Time (11/16/20)
In the Silt Nearby (6/2/20)

Susanne Mentzer
Kevin Korth

Wages, Rages (10/15/20)

Jason Hainsworth

Melissa Dufort*
Friction Quartet
Kody Thiessen*

One Wish (3/13/21)

Dave Ragland

Friction Quartet
Matthew Worth

Under God's Heaven (6/6/21)

Richard Pearson Thomas

Friction Quartet
Susanne Mentzer

“Close your eyes”

Stephen Bachicha

My Senses, My Sense is... (8/3/20)
One Tangible Tear (1/26/21)
Come with me (8/10/20)

Friction Quartet
Susanne Mentzer & Matthew Worth

Program Notes

Susanne's Thoughts for Program

I chose the title Standing Still: Still Standing to sum up the nearly two past years of Covid-19 shut down and anxiety that left us standing still... waiting. Tonight we are still standing - able to listen to and perform music in person after two years. What a triumph of unanticipated patience and resilience.

During the summer of 2020 when Reg was inspired to start writing again I decided to commission songs with his poems as a Christmas gift. The first song on this evening's program is that song by Jake Heggie. The composer Libby Larsen, a friend whose music I have premiered, set *The "US" Treasury*. In early 2021 I thought why not actually commission an evening of songs? I never have commissioned and felt that at this point in my artistic life it would be a great thing to do. I happen to love the combination of voice with string quartet and feel like there can never be too much of that repertoire. I also felt it could contribute to the vocal canon. There was something intriguing about imagining future musicians looking for repertoire and finding some of these pieces.

Off I went on this venture, sending poems I thought would be enhanced by being set to music to each composer and asking them to use one they liked; In some cases the composers chose to set more than one text. There are even a few of the same poems set by more than one composer. It is interesting to hear the differences and similarities. Reg's poems are about everything from love and nature to aging and some political angst. The titles are listed with the date the poems were written since much has happened to us and our world during this time. Often the date is significant to the topic of the poem. The musical settings run the gamut from jazz arrangements to classical.

I chose Hilary Purrington because she was once a student at Rice University where I taught from 2006-2012 and had taken a lesson with me. Karim Al-Zand is a fellow faculty member from my years at Rice. Stephen Bachicha, while still a student, wrote a cycle of songs I premiered called "*New Mexico Fragments*" in 2010. (We both have a connection to Santa Fe.) There were many composers I knew of and

admired so I cast my net wide. Although some were busy composing operas and, as a result, unavailable, I still found some wonderful and diverse composers. Andre Myers and Dave Ragland were suggested by Darryl Taylor of The African American Art Song Alliance. Michael Ching was in the Houston Opera Studio around the same time as I was and has much success as an opera and song composer. Jason Hainsworth is on faculty at SFCM and a wonderful jazz composer. (He requested a Black singer perform his piece “in the key of George Floyd” so my student Melissa Dufort will sing it.) I met jazz pianist and composer Tammy Hall at a holiday open house. Kurt Erickson offered to do a piece for the event. There were two who I had hoped to include but were not finished. One is by a talented SFCM grad Tamara McLeod. That will be performed at another time.

I need to thank Matthew Worth for agreeing to sing tonight and take some of the load off of my shoulders. All the pieces were written with me in mind so the composers have been amenable to making adjustments for his beautiful baritone voice. I also have to hand it to Kevin Korth for his amazing ability to help me learn these pieces. Above all, gratitude to Reg Huston for writing such beautiful and powerful words.

Reg's Thoughts

The pandemic has affected all of us in so many different ways. In March, 2020, life changed dramatically. Scared half out of my wits (no, totally out of my wits), I stayed home and had to find something to do to relieve my fears and apprehensions. So, I wrote. To date, I have put down on paper almost 500 entries about life, society, Alzheimer's, the “here and beyond”, nature, my family and a lot about aging.

The reason for this “out-pouring” was for “in-looking”. I just talked to myself. Heck, I needed SOMEONE to talk to! Turns out, I touched a nerve every once in a while and Susanne was kind enough (and brave enough) to contact some of her very talented friends and colleagues who also took an interest in my ranting.

I do not claim to be Milton or Keats, Garrison Keillor or even Dr. Seuss. I can say, however, that whatever I have tried to express was written honestly about where my mind and heart were at that specific time. Some of my poems and stories have no rhyme (or, even, reason) to

them whatsoever. In some, I tried to follow certain patterns. In some, I simply had a stream of consciousness. All of the works have mistakes and need loving care in their reading and empathy and criticism. So, I hope these bits into “what makes ‘good ol’ Reggie’ tick” can bring you some humor and, hopefully, a tear, as well.

It is with my deepest appreciation and love that I thank Susanne and the wonderful composers and artists here tonight for their time and talent as well as my family and friends for their support and inspiration.

As Emily Dickinson said, “Judge tenderly of me.”

**SFCM Current Student or Alumni*

****Friction Quartet (Alumni)***

Otis Harriel, *violin*

Kevin Rogers, *violin*

Rachyl Martinez, *viola*

Doug Machiz, *cello*

Poetry & Notes

Sitting, Just Sitting - June 13, 2020

It was a gorgeous day in the garden. I was sitting (obviously) watching and soaking in the scene while drinking iced coffee. Pretty nice. — Reg Huston

Here's a song for you and Reg. I love this poem ... and the song just came to me out of the blue the other day. So, here you are. — Jake Heggie

Sitting, just sitting, outside
Listening to my breathing,
Listening to my heart and inner self,
Taking time to really think about who I am,
who you are.

Looking at the world;
Trees
Ocean
Sky
Your face

Listening to the world;
Birds
Music
Colors
Your sighs
Feeling the world;
Breezes
Ladybug crawling up my leg
Sunshine
Your hand

Tasting the world;
Lemonade
Ice cream,
Watermelon
Your kiss
Smelling the world;
Flowers
Barbecue
Your scent
Your hair

Sitting, just sitting.
What a day!
What a life!

The Great Fog - July 31, 2020

I have been thinking a lot about getting older and losing contact with the shoreline. Some days, it's pretty foggy. — Reg Huston

The harbor lights are blanketed,
the moored bells muffled and silent;
no gulls, no sea lions, no lapping of waves;
rather than stealthily creeping,
the fog oozes
and enwraps
and chokes.

Nothing dares to move for fear of disrupting
the nervous and tenuous tide.
How close is the shore?
How far off am I from the breaking waves which,
eerily,
cannot be distinguished.

Strange, there is no recognition of depth
or movement of any wave
or of anything tangible.

I call out into the gray void
and my voice does not travel or echo.

It falls.
It sinks.
It drowns.

In the Silt Nearby - June 2, 2020

A documentary I watched showed a group of scientists and historians searching for WW2 planes lost at sea. When they discovered one, they tried to piece together the fragment they found to discover how the plane went down but, more importantly, who was on the plane. They uncovered, in the wreckage, a wallet, a captain's button. These things, pieced together, presented a picture but it was not until one diver found "in the silt nearby" the name of the pilot on a medal. We, oftentimes, find ourselves, "In the Silt Nearby". — Reg Huston

In the silt of my memories,
I sift through the dust and fragments.
You gradually reappear in bits and pieces,
and thoughts and prayers,
and shards.

I try to reconstruct.
I try to move ahead and reassemble the jumbled
and disparate parts.
Gradually.
Slowly.
Without pause, I put you (and me) back together.

The waves wash over,
cleansing,
clarifying.
I return to that place,
to that time,
to that walk
alone
with hope and you in my mind
Forever

The “US” Treasury - August 17, 2020

I was reminded of Maurice Chevalier and Hermione Gingold singing
“I Remember It Well”. So sweet. So tender. — Reg Huston

Reg’s poetry is just wonderful. Each one its own universe and his way of
letting me, the reader, in feels personal and somehow trusting. Every one of
the poems sparks music in me. I can already hear The “US” Treasury August
17, 2020... — Libby Larsen

I have a treasury of thankful memories for the life that I lived.
For instance:
I remember the times at our favorite café;
drinking lattes and savoring croissants.
So good, so sweet.
Like you.

Thank you.
Yes, I’ll have another, please.

One day, an older couple sat to our right
at a nearby table (remember?);
they still laughed together;
still held hands
A younger couple, sat on our left,
hoping,
their eyes laughed,
they held hands,
Our life.
Our story

Comb - June 2, 2020

It's sweet to grow old with someone, right? — Reg Huston

The vocal part of Comb is expressive and nostalgic, almost vulnerable in the face of the busyness and chaos of life, represented in the piano by the busy and sometimes chaotic textures. The piano part also reminds me of time's incessant march forward, which echoes similar concerns and sentiments in the poem ("thinking about the years gone by...as the years quickly passed..."). — Kurt Erickson

He was combing her hair
while they sat amazed by the fire,
caressing and thinking about the years gone by.
The long gray strands that she
allowed herself to succumb to;
the eventual color change
as the years quickly passed.

It is what life brings us to:
that which we cannot hold on to
but can hold in our hearts.
It is all we have:
each other
if we are lucky enough
to find a supportive soul.

In the Wee Hours - May 15, 2021

I know you are out there, (my mother, my sister), watching me, kindly.
— Reg Huston

"In the Wee Hours" is a nocturnal piece. The piano has twinkling stars that glimmer quietly behind the voice. — Karim Al-Zand

In the wee hours, when it is so quiet,
the only sound
is the twinkling of distant stars,
I see you.
Light years away and, yet,
I see you.
I see you as I have always seen you:
bright, dazzling, brilliant;
unreachable but so comforting.

Glimpse Through the Fog - May 12, 2020

Someone close to me is going through the early stages of Alzheimer's. He sees and remembers clearly and, then, he doesn't; and then, he is lucid, again. It's like the fog I see that rolls up through the canyon where I live. I watch the fog and think of him. — Reg Huston

“Glimpse through the Fog” takes place in a misty haze. A voice struggles to break through the gloom briefly, but then recedes within enveloping waves.
— Karim Al-Zand

On the bay, it chokes;
canyon crawling, it intrigues,
envelopes and tricks;
it conceals, then, reveals,
then, conceals, again.

For an instant
(and only an instant), I see;
I see a wink of sky,
a dash of clarity.

I see what I think might be
as I am inside the cloud now.
I do hear the sea, so I know it is there.
It's my sea with the waves crashing around me.

Heaven's Gaze - December 30, 2020

There is great freedom, satisfaction and calmness when you accept yourself as part of the big picture. — Reg Huston

I'm sad I didn't meet Reg Huston twenty or thirty years ago. I've clicked with his approach which, to me, is so much more like a lyricist than a rigid poet. I hope to make up for lost time and look forward to a long term collaboration. – Michael Ching

What can heaven show me
that I can't see in your eyes;
when I look upon their beauty
they reflect the starry skies.

What can nature offer,
what magnificence, indeed;
your humanity is deeper
than all of her vast seas.

Can the mountain ranges
overpower the strength you own;
they bow in humbled silence
by the goodness that you've sown.

They cast empty shadows
but your light shines through, I find;
and your laughter echoes clearly
and your kindness clears my mind.

When I look to heaven
and I seek to find what's true,
I am thankful that you love me
and that "heaven's gaze" is you.

The Person in the Moon - December 31, 2020

My small attempt at some humor re: women's equality. — Reg Huston

Why is the "man in the moon" called that?
It should be a woman you see;
It makes much more sense to be female,
As women are born heavenly.

The Romans praised Luna the goddess,
not a longshoreman named Fred.
It's beautiful up in the night sky,
It should be a lady instead.

The celestial sky is her boudoir.
The Milky Way hugs her round curves.
Let's throw out the ego of "man"kind
and give her the love she deserves.

Fill the Crescent Moon - September 27, 2021

For Ed Huston

My brother and I, as young boys, had early morning paper routes. We loved it. It was quiet. No sounds. No traffic. We would always stop at the local 24 hour donut shop (Marie's). Once in a while, an owl would swoop by. One morning, the moon was in its crescent phase and my brother, (what, 13 years old), said to me, "the moon is shaped like that so people can make wishes. Then, when it gets all filled up, it drops them down on the wishers." I never forgot that sweet moment. — Reg Huston

A silver sliver,
suspended, seemingly,
by a celestial thread
hangs against a motionless, black drape.

Waiting high above our wondrous, incredulous stare,
it will gradually fill with wishes from lovers
and from children at bedtime.
"Star kisses" will drop into its hollowed bowl until it fills.
Then, suddenly, it will burst and overflow,
cascading down upon all who deeply yearn
that their dreams will come true.

Reciting a nocturnal blessing,
pouring across the heavens,
the night sky shimmers, magically, as if thousands of comets
rain down to fulfill those wants
and reflect, glistening, in the tears of children;

And, with hands together, on their knees next to their beds,
their prayers are answered
as, too, are the expectant gazes of those, old,
still needing something to believe in.

It's All I Want - April 11, 2021

Trying to answer the big question: What's important? — Reg Huston

I would rather see your face than look at the stars on a moonless night;
I would rather kiss your lips than drink champagne on New Year's Eve;
I would rather hear you sigh in my ear than listen to the crashing waves;
I would rather hold you close to my heart than breathe;
what more can I say?

When I wake to the morning, I want you to be by my side;
When I close my eyes in the evening, I want you lying next to me;
Every moment as I go through life, I want to share them all with you,
For it is you who makes it all worthwhile. It is you and only you.

Pandemic Times Society Disorder (PTSD) - March 27, 2021

I think this “explosion” in my head says it. BLM. — Reg Huston

Inbred
Incompetence
Intolerable
Injustice

Unimaginable
Unchallenged
Unchecked
Unhinged

Abusive
Corrosive
Derisive
Indecisive

Battered
Beaten
Bought
Abandoned

Can't handle it
Can't condone it
Can't flee it
Can't forget it

It's a Tough Time - November 16, 2020

This is a simple reflection of letting go. Gotta let go. — Reg Huston

I am at a tough time in my life.
My sons are too old for me to take care of them
and I am too young to let them go

Wages, Rages - October 15, 2020

I can't begin to understand the anger in the black community. I am trying.
— Reg Huston

The words from this poem hit me hard. It reminded me of so many things... the fight for basic rights, going to church with my family as a child, and just plain old living as a Black man in America. I wanted to reflect all of these elements in this piece. I wrote this composition in G-Flat in honor of George Floyd. — Jason Hainsworth

Wages, rages,
Lying, constant lying.
Sickness, hatred,
Excuses I'm not buying.

Black man, freeman?
Oh no, son, I don't think so;
The high court you're packing,
It's trust now that we're lacking.

You cuff me, rebuff me
You count on vote suppression,
You hold me,
yet embold me
I won't accept aggression.

Be clear now, hear me now,
Get off my neck, my soul aches;
Let kindness light darkness
It's love we preach
for God's sake.

One Wish - March 13, 2021

So, it's your last day on earth. Why not this? — Reg Huston

one wish I have
above all others, only one:
to see you again in your finest dress;
to hold your face gently in my two hands
and look so deeply into your eyes
that I see your soul, your heart,
our past;
to see you one more time
and place that strand of hair behind you ear,
let my finger draw the contour of your cheek
and hold you near
and kiss that perfect mouth,

those lips that I have never forgotten.
that is my only wish
for it is everything.

Under God's Heaven - June 6, 2021

There is great joy in knowing that this existence is wonderful. Simple as that.
— Reg Huston

One July night in the summer of 2020, I drove my 89-year-old mother to a hilltop near her Montana home to catch Comet NEOWISE, visiting briefly on it's 6766 year orbit around the sun. It took her moment to find the comet since it was flying vertically not horizontally, but she exclaimed with joy when she saw it. On first reading *Under God's Heaven* June 6, 2021, I immediately recalled the image of her clutching the car door for balance and staring up at the sky with awe. — Richard Pearson Thomas

As I sleep under the stars,
under God's grand and enveloping heaven,
I am alone and I need no one
for I am at home in my heart and in my mind and with my soul.
I am at peace and I am free.

Those stars are my friends;
there is no beginning or end
to their glory or to the joy I feel
for we are one;
we are one!

My Sense is, My Senses - August 3, 2020

I admit that I am way behind in my understanding of and involvement in the greater needs of society. I am becoming much more aware. There is hope for me. — Reg Huston

The dying woman speaks to her child of her past and hardships, as her memory goes in and out. As she's dying, she remembers her past, until the spirit of her long past lover calls to her and guides her. "Close Your Eyes, dear"; words spoken as she drifts away from her earthly body and joins him in paradise.— Stephen Bachicha

I became deaf long ago
but I can still hear the cries of anguish
and the shrieks of horror of the oppressed
every day, every night.

When I had no more taste for the cruelty
beaten into the backs and skulls of the innocent,
I still winced at the bitterness
because, in the light of day,

I could feel the pain of the plight of the thousands
and, I cried,
for in the darkness,
I could see the writing on the wall.

one tangible tear - January 26, 2021

I would often watch my mother, in her late years, and the way she would react to bad news. She would not flail about and yell or scream. She would be very quiet and stare out the window. Nothing bad that happened in her life would ever compare to the loss of her daughter, my beloved sister, at age 28. I am sure that most, if not all, of my mother's tears were shed on that day in 1974. The pain was so great but she kept on. So, I think, for most aged people, they can spare only one more tear at a time.

— Reg Huston

one drop of rain on a window pane;
a descending streak of opaque vision.
a tear on the cheek of an old person
is the same; no less, no more.

the elderly don't cry out loud,
they don't sob.
they internalize,
silently,
privately,
with one tangible tear,
only one tangible tear.
they stare off into the distance,
while looking at their past
through cataracts

"Come visit me.
Is it time for my meal?
Is it time for my medicine?
Is it my... time?
My hand in my lap
keeping time
to a song in my head.

I was wondering about the...
oh, I forgot.
Where was I?
Where am I?

Listen. There. There!
The music is playing.
I remember that tune! I remember our song!
We danced along.
I remember the night I first spent with you.
I remember.
I remember THAT, I do.

The music stopped.
Where was I?"
staring off in the distance
while looking back.

Come With Me - August 10, 2020

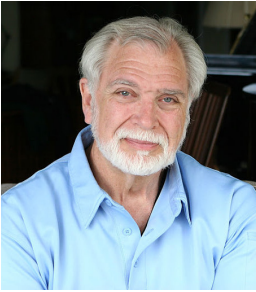
It would be nice to see a kind face and feel a gentle hand when I go.
And you? — Reg Huston

Close your eyes, dear,
you can see me floating gently in the breeze.
I will drift by as you're sleeping,
come with me, sweet, come with me.

Do not tarry,
do not worry,
I am here for you, my dear.
We will fly up to the heavens,
you will rest and have no fear.

Trust your vision,
you're not dreaming,
you've awakened to your love,
We are joined now,
here in heaven,
rest eternal in my love.

Biographies



Reg Huston, has been writing poems throughout his life but he started writing prolifically during the COVID 19 shutdown. He is currently working on a book of illustrated children's animal poems and looking to publish *Gray Matters*, a compilation of poems about aging. Reg is a performer, a father, and a supporter of youth-related performing arts. A native of Sacramento, CA he received his Bachelor and Master Degrees vocal performance and quickly went into the opera

world by being a charter member of the Hidden Valley Music Seminars opera ensemble, singing with the Music Academy of the West and with the San Francisco Opera Merola program before heading to do advanced studies in Vienna. He performed as Figaro in *the Marriage of Figaro*, directed by Peter Ustinov at the Salzburg Mozarteum resulting in a two-year contract with the Hamburg State Opera in Hamburg, Germany. After returning to the states Reg continued to perform at Hidden Valley Opera where he performed over 30 roles from 1977-1986. For 35 years, he has performed leading roles with The Western Stage, Pacific Repertory Theater and the Forest Theater Guild, (all in Monterey County. In addition to his performing life, Reg oversaw the care for many programs for high school students (summer orchestra and choral programs) as well as outreach programs for middle schools throughout Monterey County. Reg then became Director of Programs with Youth Music Monterey. As a former professional fundraiser for a multitude of charities in Monterey County, he is the Founder and Executive Director of the S.T.A.R. Foundation of Monterey County (Support the Arts Regionally). With a life-long connection with the theatrical experience Reg felt a desire to help provide opportunities for young people to have those same experiences. For this he was awarded "Philanthropist of the Year" by the Arts Council for Monterey County and recognized by the California State Senate for his contribution to the arts. Reg is a member of ASCAP.



American mezzo-soprano **Susanne Mentzer** is an international singer, writer, teacher and arts advocate. She has enjoyed a significant opera, concert, chamber music and recital career of over thirty-five years appearing on four continents at nearly every great opera house and orchestra, and at the Metropolitan Opera since 1989. She has collaborated with a "who's who" of conductors,

string quartets and orchestras . Her extensive discography includes over 25 commercial recordings. She produced a recording: *Letter to the World - songs* by American opera composer Carlisle Floyd. Her solo recordings include: *The Eternal Feminine*, a recital of music by women composers including the premiere of Libby Larsen's *Love After 1950*, Libby Larsen and Friends, with a cycle about 9/11/01 *Sifting Through the Ruins* and *Wayfaring Stranger* with Grammy Award-winning guitarist Sharon Isbin. She received a Grammy nomination for her work as Colombina in Busoni's *Arlecchino*. Other recent releases include Carlisle Floyd's *Wuthering Heights* and *Plump Jack* by Gordon Getty. Susanne appears on DVDs of productions from La Scala, Opéra de Paris, and Grammy nominated *The First Emperor* by Tan Dun (Metropolitan Opera), and *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Metropolitan Opera). She has appeared numerous times on PBS as part of the Live from Lincoln Center and "Live from the Met" programs and the Met Cinema broadcast. Susanne has contributed to the Huffington Post. Her outspokenness about vocal health earned her the VERA Award 2013 (Voice Education Research Awareness) from The Voice Foundation. Last but not least, Susanne is a mentor to young singers. She maintains a private studio, teaches at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (her 22nd year teaching at the university level) and serves on the Board of Directors of The Sullivan Foundation and The George London Foundation which support promising young singers. She received the esteemed Alexian Brothers USA Thelan Award for her help raising over one-million dollars through gala concerts for the AIDS cause in Chicago and continues to participate in charitable events.



SFCM faculty **Matthew Worth** is hailed by The New York Times for a voice that is "fully powered and persuasively expressive." He is quickly becoming the baritone of choice for innovative productions and contemporary works on the operatic leading edge. Worth and his creative partners won Grammy for "Best Choral Performance" for their recording of Richard Danielpour's dramatic oratorio "*The Passion of*

Yeshua". Highlights of recent seasons include the title role in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with Boston Lyric Opera, the title role in the world premiere of *JFK* with Fort Worth Opera, the world premiere of *The Manchurian Candidate* with Minnesota Opera, and *Moby Dick* at Washington National Opera. Lauded for his work in the standard operatic repertoire, he has performed leading roles at Santa Fe Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Castleton Festival, Tanglewood Festival, Pittsburgh Opera, and Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, under such luminary conductors as James Levine, Lorin Maazel, and Sir Andrew Davis. Matthew is a committed recitalist and

active concert soloist. He performed Schumann's *Dichterliebe* and Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* with the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and was praised by The New York Times as "simply superb, singing with exquisite sensitivity." Matthew has been featured in concerts with the Atlanta Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the Boston Pops Orchestra, and has performed with conductors Donald Runnicles, Robert Spano and James Conlon.



As an in-demand pianist and coach in the Bay Area, pianist **Kevin Korth** has collaborated with artists such as Robert Mann, Joel Krosnick, Susanne Mentzer, William Burden and Marnie Breckenridge. Mr. Korth is also an avid practitioner of yoga and meditation, and seeks to use performance as a vehicle to bring himself and the audience deeper into the present moment. Kevin graduated with a Master's degree in Chamber Music at the San Francisco

Conservatory of Music with Paul Hersch. Since then, he has held a position at the Conservatory as both a Vocal Coach and a Collaborative Pianist, dividing his time between working with instrumentalists and singers, and performing in numerous recitals throughout the year.



Friction Quartet exists to modernize the chamber music experience and expand the string quartet repertoire. Friction achieves this mission by commissioning new works, curating imaginative programs, collaborating with artists, and presenting interactive educational outreach. Joshua Kosman (San Francisco Chronicle) has declared them,

"The Bay Area's redoubtable new-music ensemble." Since forming in 2011, Friction has commissioned fifty works for string quartet and given world premiere performances of more than eighty works. They won Second Prize in the 2016 Schoenfeld Competition, were quarter-finalists in the 2015 Fischhoff Competition, and placed second at the 2015 Frances Walton Competition. Friction has held residencies at the New Music for Strings Festival in Denmark, Interlochen Arts Camp, Lunenburg Academy of Music, Napa Valley Performing Arts Center, Old First Concerts, San Francisco Friends of Chamber Music, and was the first ensemble in residence at the Center for New Music. They are ensemble educators with SF Symphony's Adventures in Music Program, KDFC Playground Pop Ups, and more.

Composers

Jake Heggie is the composer of the operas *Dead Man Walking*, *Moby-Dick*, *It's A Wonderful Life*, *If I Were You*, *Great Scott*, *Three Decembers* and *Two Remain*, among others. In addition to eight full-length operas and several one-acts, he has also composed nearly 300 songs, as well as chamber, choral and orchestral works. Heggie has served as a mentor for the Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative *INTONATIONS: Songs from the Violins of Hope* (Scheer) recently received a premiere and live recording. Upcoming are *Songs for Murdered Sisters*, a song cycle to new poems by Margaret Atwood, and *Intelligence* (Scheer, Zollar), a new opera for the Houston Grand Opera.

Hilary Purrington is a composer of chamber, vocal, and orchestral music. Her work has received recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); the International Alliance for Women in Music; and the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), among others. Her dance, orchestral and chamber works have been performed by many distinguished ensembles.. Recent commissions include new works for the New York Youth Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. For the 2018–19 season, Purrington was named the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra's Composer of the Year and served as composer-in-residence for the Musical Chairs Chamber Ensemble. She is a 2020 recipient of an orchestral commission from the League of American Orchestras Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

Larsen Libby is one of America's most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over 15 operas. Grammy award-winning and widely recorded, including over 50 CDs of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory. As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer's Forum, which has become an invaluable aid for composers in a transitional time for American arts.

Kurt Erickson has achieved global success with his *Here, Bullet* song set, a work that won First Prize in the 2020 NATS Art Song competition and has been premiered during the 2019-2020 Season on three continents by 30

separate singers. Erickson currently serves as Composer-in-Residence with San Francisco's LIEDER ALIVE!, writing and premiering new commissioned works on their subscription concert series. Considered an entrepreneurial artist and thought leader, Erickson has implemented and designed over ten years of innovative multi-year composer residencies with performing arts organizations, cathedrals, dance companies, and national shrine. He designed the weekly CRC Music: *In The Studio* series at Sacramento's Cosumnes River College, and frequently serves as a guest artist at colleges and universities across the country.

The music of Canadian-American composer **Karim Al-Zand** (b.1970) has been called "strong and startlingly lovely" (Boston Globe). His compositions are wide-ranging in influence and inspiration, encompassing solo, chamber, vocal and orchestral works. From scores for dance, to compositions for young people, to multidisciplinary and collaborative works, Al-Zand's music is diverse in both its subject matter and its audience. It explores connections between music and other arts, and draws inspiration from varied sources such as graphic art, myths and fables, folk music of the world, film, spoken word, jazz, and his own Middle Eastern heritage. Al-Zand's music has enjoyed success in the US, Canada and abroad and he is the recipient of several national awards, including the "Arts and Letters Award in Music" from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

An opera composer/librettist, conductor, and songwriter, **Michael Ching** is the composer/librettist of the opera *SPEED DATING TONIGHT! (SDT!)* With over one hundred productions since its 2013 premiere at the SDT! is one of the most popular operas of the 21st century. Recent projects include *ALL DRESSED UP (No Place to Go)* for L'arietta Productions in Singapore, and a series of nine quarantine-related songs which are now part of *SDT!*. His newest opera, *RSBE*, had its premiere at the University of Alabama in 2020. Michael works regularly with Amarillo Opera, is Composer-in-Residence at Savannah Voice Festival, and Opera consultant at EC Schirmer. In 2019, Michael was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Opera Association. With a lifelong devotion to the craft of operatic composition learned through the success and failure of over a dozen operas, through composition study, and through years of conducting the standard operatic repertoire; and with a strong interest in folk and country music, Michael is a somewhat of an outlier in the world of new music.

Tammy Hall has worked with a who's who of jazz vocalists and musicians - award-winning cabaret singer and actress Connie Champagne, the Supreme Mary Wilson, chanteuse and actress Debbie De Coudreaux, Amikaeyla Gaston, The Montclair Women's Big Band, Houston Person, David 'Fathead

Newman', violinists Regina Carter, Jeremy Cohen, Mads Tolling and Laurie Anderson, orchestra leader and bassist Marcus Shelby, drummer and band leader Allison Miller and guitarist Terrence Brewer. In 2019 Tammy was recognized by the San Francisco Chapter of the Human Rights Commission, as one of the recipients of its inaugural Pleasant-Leidesdorff San Francisco Community Stalwart Award. She has traveled and performed extensively in Japan, Europe and Mexico, including a 30-city tour with Queen Esther Marrow and the Harlem Gospel Singers throughout Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Other venues and festivals of note include Kennedy Center (Mary Lou Williams Jazz Festival), Dizzy's and the Rose Room at Jazz At Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Herbst Theatre, The Freight & Salvage Coffeehouse, Monterey Jazz Festival, San Jose Jazz Festival, SFJazz Center, Yoshi's Oakland and San Francisco and Kuumbwa Jazz in Santa Cruz, CA.

Andre Myers is a composer and instructor of piano, composition and theory based in California's Inland Empire. Called "an insightful and skillful new voice" (Times Union), and "ingenious. . . powerful" (icareifyoulisten.com), his music mixes narrative drama, poetry, and meditations on color to create work that aspires to moments of honesty, poignancy, and depth.

American composer, writer, and filmmaker **Daron Hagen** is the creator of thirteen operas (including two conceived as film/stage hybrids), five symphonies, twelve concertos, dozens of instrumental works, film scores, and over 350 art songs and cycles. Presently garnering laurels at film festivals, his auteur composer/filmmaker debut, the visionary opera film Orson Rehearsed (released on Naxos Records and DVD/Blu-ray in March 2021), may be seen on the major streaming platforms, and is receiving bookings for both theatrical screenings and physical productions in over a dozen countries.

Dave Ragland Jr. is a four-time EMMY nominated composer, vocalist, pianist, and conductor. He arranged "*Lift Every Voice and Sing*" for GRAMMY-nominated opera singer Lawrence Brownlee for "Concert for Inauguration Day" presented by Washington National Opera. In Nashville Opera's first ever commission, Dave collaborated with librettist Mary McCallum to create "*ONE VOTE WON*" - an opera commemorating the centennial of Women's Suffrage. Dave, in collaboration with Inversion Vocal Ensemble, hackled feet DANCE, and Diaspora Orchestra, debuted his opera "*STEAL AWAY*" as Artist-in-Residence for OZ Arts. For the past three seasons, Dave has served as chorus master for Nashville Symphony's "*Let Freedom Sing*". Dave Ragland is the 2020 GRADY-RAYAM Negro Spirituals Foundation Composer-in Residence.

Jason Hainsworth serves as the Executive Director of the Roots, Jazz, and American Music (RJAM) program at the SFCM as well as serving as Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. In demand both as a saxophonist and as a composer/arranger, Mr. Hainsworth has led his own quartet throughout the world to critical acclaim. He has also performed and recorded with Michael Dease, Johnathan Blake, Renee Rosnes, Randy Brecker, Lewis Nash, Glenn Zaleski, Tim Warfield, and Martin Bejerano just to name a few. As a composer & arranger, Mr. Hainsworth's works have been performed throughout the country. He has received commissions to arrange music for Jimmy Cobb, Russell Malone, Tim Warfield, and many others. Mr. Hainsworth's debut album, *Kaleidoscope*, features original compositions and arrangements for big bands with the likes of Tanya Darby, Linda Oh, Claudio Roditi, and Michael Dease as soloists.

Richard Pearson Thomas is a composer and pianist. His work, *Race for the Sky*, which was commissioned as a commemoration of the events of 9/11, has been performed by the Westchester Philharmonic Orchestra and in recitals nationwide and abroad including in the Sydney Opera House. Theatrical works include *The Nero Show!*, a quasi-operatic vaudeville cabaret show, commissioned by Bruce Rameker. It was premiered in 2019 at the Triad Theater in New York City. Mr. Thomas's comic opera, *A Wake or a Wedding*, *Parallel Lives* was produced Off-Off Broadway by the Riverside Opera Ensemble, as was *Ladies in a Maze*, produced by Encompass Music Theatre and musical *Golden Gate*. Original music for *In Thinking of America: Songs of the Civil War* has been heard in more than 150 cities nationwide.

Stephen Bachicha is a composer most interested in blending the beauty and fun in both listening to and performing music. He has had solo as well as ensemble works performed throughout the United States and in parts of Europe. His works have been noted to be "...a thoroughly entertaining bumptious phantasmagoria of American sass...", and are often inspired by visual art and sometimes humorous ideas. His Cello Concerto, *Atlas non-finito*, inspired by the unfinished sculptures of Michelangelo, was premiered by the Houston Civic Symphony and cellist Norman Fischer. Other works include his orchestral work *Allusions, Illusions and Delusions*, song cycle *New Mexico Fragments*, commissioned by Susanne Mentzer. For two consecutive years, two solo flute pieces *Red Stilettos* and *N'Awlins Funks* were premiered at the National Flute Convention. In 2013, internationally acclaimed violinist, SoJin Kim premiered his *Four Scenes for Solo Violin* and was on tour in Europe. He received his Doctorate Degree from Rice University studying primarily with Art Gottshalk and Kurt Stallman. In addition to his compositional activities, Stephen enjoys spending time with his wife Liz, and two little dudes Peter and Owen.

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Instruments of Generosity:

(\$1000-\$2000)

Angela Choi (Karim Al-Zand)
Margaret Pack (Friction Quartet)

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Anonymous
(Richard Pearson Thomas)
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Kelly Clarke
Katherine Edison
Tom Graham
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Sue Hinshaw
Jesse Huston
Reg Huston
Teri and Roger Inloes

From the Heart (\$100) Cont'd

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