

# A Concert in Honor of Vivian Perlis



## PRESENTED BY THE FLORESTAN RECITAL PROJECT

Society for American Music 42nd annual conference

Boston, Massachusetts

11 March 2016

**TONY ARNOLD**, soprano

**ALISON D'AMATO**, pianist

*Steinway piano provided by M. Steinert & Sons*

The Society for American Music is delighted to welcome you to the inaugural Vivian Perlis Concert, the first in an annual series of performances of music by contemporary American composers at the society's annual conferences. We are grateful to the Virgil Thomson Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund, and to members of the Society for their generous support.

This concert series honors Vivian Perlis, whose publications, scholarly activities, and direction of the Oral History of American Music (OHAM) project at Yale University have made immeasurable contributions to our understanding of American composers and music cultures. In 2007 the Society for American Music awarded her the Lifetime Achievement Award for her remarkable achievements.

# THE PROGRAM

## **CHARLES IVES (1874–1954)**

Ann Street (1921)  
Evening (1921)  
A Night Song (1895)  
The Children's Hour (1901)

## **ELLIOT CARTER (1908–2012)**

Am Klavier (no. 3 from *Of Challenge and of Love*, 1994)  
Dust of Snow (no. 1 from *Three Poems of Robert Frost*, 1943)

## **IVES**

Afterglow (1919)

## **VIRGIL THOMSON (1896–1989)**

Vernal Equinox (1920)  
Preciosilla (1927)

## **JOHN CAGE (1912–1992)**

The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs (1942)

## **PAULINE OLIVEROS (b. 1932)**

Spider Song (no. 2 from *Three Songs for soprano and piano*, 1957)  
Wind Horse (1989)

## **DAVID LIPTAK (b. 1949)**

From *Dove Songs* (2015)  
Refrain  
Beauty and the Beast

## **JOSEPH SCHWANTNER (b. 1943)**

*Two Poems of Agueda Pizarro* (1980)  
Shadowinower  
Black Anemones

**Florestan Recital Project** (Aaron Engebretson and Alison d'Amato, Artistic Co-directors) takes its name from the fiery character of Florestan, one of the creative alter egos of composer Robert Schumann, who wrote of a basic artistic mission: "to be remindful of older times and their works and to emphasize that only from such a pure source can new artistic beauties be fostered." This message is at the center of our activities; generating projects that draw connections between art song of the past, present, and future while exploring the genre's rich collaborative possibilities. Since its inception in 2001, Florestan Recital Project has grown into a national art song powerhouse, engaging audiences and artists in art song performance, innovation, recording, and mentorship.

Florestan's artistic activities are comprised of recitals, recordings, song festivals, residencies, and premieres. We regularly collaborate with innovative arts organizations from museums to ballet companies. Our recording activity commenced in 2008 with the creation of Florestan Records, which has grown into a varied and critically-acclaimed catalog of existing and world-premiere art song recordings, affirming our conviction that the gift of live performance gains value the more music is shared.

## THE PERFORMERS

“Soprano **Tony Arnold** is a luminary in the world of chamber music and art song. Hailed by the *New York Times* as “a bold, powerful interpreter,” she is recognized internationally as a leading proponent of new music in concert and recording, having premiered over 200 works “with a musicality and virtuosity that have made her the Cathy Berberian of her generation” (*Chicago Tribune*). Since becoming the first-prize laureate of both the 2001 Gaudeamus International Competition (NL) and the 2001 Louise D. McMahon Competition (USA), Tony Arnold has collaborated with the most cutting-edge composers and instrumentalists on the world stage.

Soprano of the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Arnold has been a catalyst for numerous groundbreaking projects, including David Lang’s *Whisper Opera*. She regularly appears with leading new music groups and festivals such as Ensemble Modern, Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Now, Los Angeles Philharmonic Green Umbrella, JACK Quartet, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and Darmstadt, among others. She works closely with the most celebrated composers of our day, including Crumb, Furrer, Kurtág, Aperghis, Birtwistle. With more than two dozen discs to her credit, she has recorded a broad segment of the modern vocal repertoire with esteemed chamber music colleagues. Her recording of George Crumb’s iconic *Ancient Voices of Children* (Bridge) was nominated for a 2006 Grammy Award.

Arnold is the recipient of the 2015-16 Brandeis Creative Arts Award, and will be in residence at the University to lead a year-long conversation about voice and identity. She is also the 2015-16 Kunkemueller Artist-in-Residence at the Boston Conservatory. Arnold is deeply invested in the education of next-generation composers and performers. Previously she taught at the Eastman School of Music and SUNY at Buffalo. She is a graduate of Oberlin College and Northwestern University, and counts among her mentors sopranos Carmen Mehta and Carol Webber, conductors Robert Spano and Victor Yampolsky, and composer György Kurtág. More about Tony Arnold at [www.screcher.com](http://www.screcher.com)

Pianist **Dr. Alison d'Amato** is Artistic Co-Director of Florestan Recital Project and Founding Faculty of the Vancouver International Song Institute (VISI). As pianist and teacher, Alison has developed projects that explore interdisciplinary collaborations and new approaches to the performer–audience relationship. In 2011 she co-created the Art Song Lab, a partnership between VISI and the Canadian Music Centre, which presents new works in collaboration with composers, poets, and audiences. From 2007-2010 she coordinated Florestan Recital Project’s position of Musical-Artists-in-Residence at Dickinson College, which included a wide variety of concerts and classroom activities that engaged the entire college community in the richness of song repertoire. In 2011 she was part of a collaboration between Florestan and Maine State Ballet, presenting “The Poet’s Love,” a highly-acclaimed original presentation of Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* with choreography.

Alison has been a guest artist at The AmBul Festival (Sofia, Bulgaria), SOURCE Song Festival, Boston Conservatory, Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto), Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, SUNY Fredonia, and Dickinson College. In addition to master classes in collaborative repertoire, Alison has shared classes with colleagues in humanities, musicology, poetry, composition, and performance. From 2006-2011 she was Visiting Assistant Professor at University at Buffalo, working with colleagues to create and enhance collaborations and chamber activities in the music department. In 2011, she joined the faculty at Eastman School of Music as Assistant Professor of Vocal Coaching.

Recent recording projects include *The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson* (New World Records, 2016), the 2014 Naxos release of *Music for Violin and Piano by Joseph Achron* with violinist Michael Ludwig, and an ongoing project of *Early Songs of Samuel Barber* (Florestan Records). Alison has received rave reviews for her work with Toronto’s Opera In Concert as pianist and music director for Donizetti’s *Roberto Devereux* and Rossini’s *La Donna del Lago*, after her lauded 2006 music directorial debut with OIC in Poulenc’s *Les Dialogues des Carmelites* that featured soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian.

Alison received the Grace B. Jackson Prize from Tanglewood Music Center in 2002 acknowledging her “extraordinary commitment of talent and energy.” She attended Oberlin College and Conservatory, and earned a double Master of Music degree in solo and collaborative piano from Cleveland Institute of Music. In May 2007, she received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from New England Conservatory of Music.

## SONG TEXTS

### **Ann Street** (1921)

text by Maurice Morris (pseudonym, dates unknown)

Quaint name, Ann street.  
Width of same, ten feet.  
Barnums mob – Ann street,  
Far from obsolete.

Narrow, yes. Ann street,

But business, both feet.  
(Nassau crosses Ann Street)  
Sun just hits Ann street,  
Then it quits – some greet!  
Rather short, Ann street ...

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### **Evening** (1921)

text by John Milton (1608–74)

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray  
Had in her sober livery all things clad;  
Silence accompanied; for the beast and bird,  
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests  
Were slunk, but the wakeful nightingale;  
She all night long her amorous descant sung;  
Silence is pleased ...

---

### **A Night Song** (1895)

text by Thomas Moore (1779–1852)

The young May moon is beaming; love,  
The glow-worm's lamp is gleaming,  
    How sweet to rove  
    Through Morna's grove,  
When the drowsy world is dreaming, love!  
Then awake! The heavens look bright, my dear,  
'Tis ne'er too late for delight,  
    And best of all the ways  
    To lengthen days  
Is to steal a few hours from the night, my dear.

---

### **The Children's Hour** (1901)

text by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82)

Between the dark and the daylight,  
    When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,  
    That is known as Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me  
    The patter of little feet  
The sound of a door that is opened  
    And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight  
    Descending the broad hall stair,  
Grave Alice and laughing Allegra  
    And Edith with golden hair.

---

**Am Klavier** (1994; no. 3 from *Of Challenge and of Love*)  
text by John Hollander (1929–2013)

The evening light dies down: all the old songs begin  
To crowd the soft air, choring confusedly.  
Then above that sea of immense complexities  
The clear tenor of memory I did not know  
I had enters; like a rod of text held out by  
A god of meaning, it governs the high, wayward  
Waves of what is always going on in the world.  
All that becomes accompaniment. And it is  
What we start out with now: this is no time  
To pluck or harp on antiquities of feeling.  
These soft hammers give gentle blows to all their strings,  
Blows that strike with a touch of challenge and of love.  
Thus what we are, being sung against what we come  
To be a part of, rises like a kind of light.

---

**Dust of Snow** (1943; no. 1 from Three Poems of Robert Frost)  
text by Robert Frost (1874–1963)

The way a crow  
Shook down on me  
The dust of snow  
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart  
A change of mood  
And saved some part  
Of a day I had rued.

---

**Afterglow** (1919)  
text by James Fenimore Cooper, Jr. (1892–1918)

At the quiet close of day,  
Gently yet the willows sway;  
When the sunset light is low,  
Lingers still the afterglow;  
Beauty tarries loth to die,  
Every lightest fantasy  
Lovelier grows in memory,  
Where the truer beauties lie.

---

**Vernal Equinox** (1920; unpublished)  
text by Amy Lowell (1874–1925)

The scent of hyacinths, like a pale mist, lies between me  
and my book;  
And the South Wind, washing through the room,  
Makes the candles quiver.  
My nerves sting at a spatter of rain on the shutter,  
And I am uneasy with the thrusting of green shoots  
Outside, in the night.

Why are you not here to overpower me with your tense  
and urgent love?

---

**Preciosilla (1927)**

text by Gertrude Stein (1874–1946)

Cousin to Clare washing.

In the win all the band beagles which have cousin lime sign and arrange a weeding match to presume a certain point to exstate to exstate a certain pass lint to exstate a lean sap prime lo and shut shut is life.

Bait, bait, tore, tore her clothes, toward it, toward a bit, to ward a sit, sit down in, in vacant surely lots, a single mingle, bait and wet, wet a single establishment that has a lily lily grow. Come to the pen come in the stem, come in the grass grown water.

Lily wet lily wet while. This is so pink so pink in stammer, a long bean which shows bows is collected by a single curly shady, shady get, get set wet bet.

It is a snuff a snuff to be told and have can wither, can is it and sleep sleeps knot, it is a lily scarf the pink and blue yellow, not blue not odour sun, nobles are bleeding two seats [two seats] on end. Why is grief. Grief is strange black. Sugar is melting. We will not swim.

Preciosilla.

Please be please be get, please get wet, wet naturally, naturally in weather. Could it be fire more firier. Could it be so in ate struck. Could it be gold up, gold up stringing, in it while while which is hanging, hanging in dingling, dingling in pinning, not so. Not so dots large dressed dots, big sizes, less laced, less laced diamonds, diamonds white, diamonds bright, diamonds in the in the light, diamonds light diamonds door diamonds hanging to be four, two four, all before, this bean, lessly, all most, a best, willow, vest, a green guest, guest, go go go go go go, go. Go go. Not guessed. Go go.

Toasted susie is my ice-cream.

---

**The Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs (1942)**

text by James Joyce (1882–1941), from *Finnegans Wake*

night by silentsailing night...

Isobel...

wildwoods' eyes and primarose hair,

quietly,

all the woods so wild, in mauves of

moss and daphnedews,

how all so still she lay neath of the

whitethorn, child of tree,

like some losthappy leaf,

like blowing flower stilled,

as fain would she anon,

for soon again 'twil be,

win me, woo me, wed me,

ah weary me!

deeply,

Now evencalm lay sleeping; night

Isobel

Sister Isobel

Saintette Isobel

madame Isa

Veuve La belle

---

**Spider Song\*** (1957; no 2 from *Three Songs for soprano and piano*)

text by Robert Duncan (1919–88)

*\*original poem title: The Spider's Song, from filament of his love sent out (memoria Whitman)*

O gorgeous Blue Bottle!  
What raptures your wild struggle!  
tremblings of the veil,  
shakings of the center!

---

from *Dove Songs* (2015)  
texts by Rita Dove (b. 1952)

**Refrain**

The man inside the mandolin  
Plays a new tune  
every night, sailing  
past the bedroom window:

*Take a gourd and string it  
Take a banana and peel it  
Buy a baby blue Nash  
And wheel and deal it*

Now he's raised a mast  
and tied himself to it  
with rags, drunker  
than a robin on the wing:

*Count your kisses  
Sweet as honey  
Count your boss'  
Dirty money*

The bed's oak  
and clumsy, pitching  
with its crew,  
a man and a wife --

Now he's dancing, moving  
only his feet. No way  
to shut him up but  
roll over, scattering

ruffles and silk,  
stiff as a dog's breath  
among lilies and  
ripening skin:

*Love on a raft  
By the light o' the moon  
And the bandit gaze  
Of the old raccoon.*

**Beauty and the Beast**

Darling, the plates have been cleared away,  
the servants are in their quarters.  
What lies will we lie down with tonight?  
The rabbit pounding in your heart, my

child legs, pale from a lifetime of petticoats?  
My father would not have had it otherwise  
when he trudged the road home with our  
souvenirs.

You are so handsome it eats my heart away . . .

Beast, when you lay stupid with grief  
at my feet, I was too young to see anything  
die. Outside, the roses were folding  
lip upon red lip. I miss my sisters ---

they are standing before their clouded mirrors.  
Gray animals are circling under windows.  
Sisters, don't you see what will snatch you up ---  
the expected, the handsome, the one who needs us?

*Two Poems of Agueda Pizarro (1980)*

text by Agueda Pizarro (b.1941), translated by Barbara Stoler Miller

**Shadowinower**

Naked,  
fierce to the waist  
where the grass flows,  
strong sowing,  
I comb my hair with sun teeth  
in solitude,  
the earth's day.  
A rolling fog,  
my damp hair  
is tangled,  
Cradled  
in my death.  
The battle of arms  
Armed  
with combs against sleep  
tumbles in seeds,  
light  
falling on my belly.  
While the dark dries  
at my fire feet  
my female mane,  
loosened,  
awakes,  
a crown in flames  
for the shadowinower.

**Black Anemones**

Mother, you watch me sleep  
and your life  
is a large tapestry  
of all the colors  
of all the most ancient  
murmurs,  
knot after twin knot,  
root after root of story.  
You don't know how fearful  
your beauty is as I sleep.  
Your hair is the moon  
of a sea sung in silence.  
You walk with silver lions  
and wait to estrange me  
deep in the rug  
covered with sorrow  
embroidered by you  
in a fierce symmetry  
binding with thread  
of Persian silk  
the pinetrees and the griffins.  
You call me blind,  
you touch my eyes  
with Black Anemones.  
I am a spider that keeps spinning  
from the spool in my womb,  
weaving through eyes  
the dew of flames  
on the web.



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