

Portraits

Snapshots of Memory, Family, and Identity

Three Portraits (2015)

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by Kieren MacMillan, text by Dana Gioia

Commissioned by HAVEN

To My Own Heart (...who refuses to come home from Brooklyn) (2021)

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by Amy Beth Kirsten, text by Estefania Mitre

Arranged for HAVEN

Hardwired for Optimism (2021)

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by Roshanne Etezady, text by Caroline Pettit Pinet

Commissioned by HAVEN

Shell and Wing (2019)

(Soprano, clarinet, piano)

by David Biedenbender, text by Robert Fanning

Arranged for HAVEN

Program Length: 60 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

Three Portraits

Kieren MacMillan (Kierenmacmillan.info)

Three Portraits.....

Kieren MacMillan (b. 1969) enjoys an active musical career on both sides of the score. As a composer and arranger, Kieren is regularly commissioned by artists and organizations around the world. His catalogue includes musicals, chamber operas, film and theatre scores, pieces for solo instruments and ensembles, vocal and choral works, spoken word compositions, and

concert-length multidisciplinary works. Many of these have received feature performances at international music conventions and festivals, as well as broadcasts on national, regional, and internet radio. Numerous recordings are currently available on compact disc or for digital download.

Kieren's musical dramas — seen by thousands of people throughout Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom — have been called “brilliant” (Mark Kanny, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review), “a new kind of musical theater...smart and moving” (Andy Druckenbrod, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette), and “a new, stunning body of story and sound, that left me deeply satisfied and piqued” (Sequenza21). In addition to being perennial audience favourites, these works have garnered many critical awards, including Outstanding New Play and Outstanding Production for Young Audiences (NOW Magazine), Top Ten Concerts in Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2006 and 2008), and a Total Theatre Award nomination (Total Theatre Edinburgh).

Kieren is also in demand as a pianist, singer, and musical director, averaging over one hundred performances and appearances each year. Recent productions he has music directed include *Robin Hood: The Legendary Musical Comedy* (Hart House), *West Side Story* (Randolph Young Company), *The Musical of Musicals: The Musical!* (Ontario premiere, Gypsy Theatre/Bluewater Playhouse), *Hats!* (Canadian premiere, Stirling Festival Theatre), and *The Great American Trailer Park Musical* (Toronto premiere, Hart House Theatre). For the past four years, Kieren has been co-creator and Music Director for the holiday panto at Stirling Festival Theatre, seen live by over ten thousand people annually.

In addition to private vocal coaching, Kieren has been on the faculty of many vocal and choral festivals and camps (StArt Youth Presenting Art Festival, New York State Summer School for the Arts), has been invited to give guest lectures and lessons at several universities and colleges in Canada and the U.S., and was the inaugural Keynote Speaker at the University of Colorado–Boulder's Entrepreneurship Center for Music. Currently, he is a faculty member at Toronto's Randolph Academy for the Performing Arts.

Kieren received his B.Mus. at the University of British Columbia, and his M.Mus. from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, where he studied with Paul Cooper and Samuel Jones. He now lives in Toronto with his wife Lada Darewych, and their two children Marianna and Theodore.

Recognized with artist fellowships from the John S. Guggenheim Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, composer-director **Amy Beth Kirsten's** musical and conceptual language is characterized by an abiding interest in exploring theatrical elements of creation, performance, and presentation. Her body of work fuses music, language, voice, and theatre and often considers musicians' instruments, bodies, and voices as equal vehicles of expression. Ms. Kirsten has written and composed fully-staged theatrical works as well as traditional concert works for her own ensemble, HOWL, musicians from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New World Symphony, Peak Performances, the multi-Grammy-winning eighth blackbird, American Composers Orchestra, and many others.

Ms. Kirsten begins the 2020-21 season in collaboration with Timothy Leopold (trumpet / libretto) writing and composing an evening-length music-driven theatrical work, *Jacob in Chains*, commissioned, produced, and performed by Alarm Will Sound.

In 2018, Ms. Kirsten composed and directed *Savior* - a collaboration between HOWL and musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for the 20th anniversary of MusicNOW. A mystical re-telling of the story of Joan of Arc for two sopranos, mezzo-soprano, alto flute, percussion, cello, and pre-recorded voice, the 60-minute work was presented on April 2 at the Harris Theater for Music and Dance and made the *Chicago Tribune's* list of "10 Best Classical Concerts of 2018." World premiere performances in 2017 of Ms. Kirsten's 90-minute *QUIXOTE* were the culmination of a 2-year artist residency at Montclair State University (NJ) with HOWL. A theatrical work inspired by Cervantes' epic novel and performed by vocal trio, singing percussion quartet, and actor/director, Mark DeChiazza, it was described as "wildly inventive" by the *New York Times*.

Colombine's Paradise Theatre, an evening-length work commissioned and produced by the multi-Grammy-winning eighth blackbird, opened the 2014-15 seasons of Chicago's Museum of Contemporary Art and New York's Miller Theatre selling out both venues. *The Washington Post* called it a "tour de force" and said it has "a beguiling element of the grotesque throughout, and the music is complex and multilayered, rich in allusions, and often extraordinarily beautiful." Anthony Tommasini at *The New York Times* found it "dark, wild and engrossing" with a "wondrously eclectic score, which combines spiky modernism, breezy pop, hints of Indian music, percussion wildness and more." Ms. Kirsten made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2014 with *strange pilgrims*, a concert work for chorus, orchestra, and film commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra. That season she was also the inaugural Composer-in-Residence for London's Riot Ensemble who commissioned *she is a myth* and gave the U.K. premieres of several of her chamber works.

Guest lectures have included those at Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester (U.K.), Yale University, Princeton University, Curtis Institute, Cornell University, and the Royal Academy of Music in London.

Ms. Kirsten grew up in the suburbs of Kansas City and Chicago and was educated at Roosevelt University (MM) and the Peabody Institute (DMA). For the spring semester of 2020, she was appointed Kerr Composer-in-Residence at Oberlin College & Conservatory. She served on the faculty of the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University during the 2015-17 academic years before joining the Composition Faculty at Longy School of Music of Bard College in the Fall of 2017. In the fall of 2020 she was invited to serve as Guest Composition Faculty at The Curtis Institute of Music.

Hardwired for Optimism

Roshanne Etezady (roshanne.com)

Hardwired for Optimism,,,,

As a young musician, **Roshanne Etezady** (b. 1973) studied piano and flute, and developed an interest in many different styles of music, from the musicals of Steven Sondheim to the 1980's power ballads and Europop of her teenage years. One fateful evening in 1986, she saw Philip Glass and his ensemble perform as the musical guests on Saturday Night Live. This event marked the beginning of her interest in contemporary classical music, as well as her interest in being a composer herself.

Since then, Etezady's works have been commissioned by the Albany Symphony, Dartmouth Symphony, eighth blackbird, Music at the Anthology, and the PRISM Saxophone Quartet. She has been a fellow at the Aspen Music Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and at the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Performers and ensembles including RÃlache, Amadinda Percussion Ensemble, Ensemble De Ereprijs, and the Dogs of Desire have performed Etezady's music throughout the United States and Europe. Roshanne Etezady's music has earned recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Korean Society of 21st Century Music, the Jacob K. Javits Foundation, Meet the Composer, and ASCAP.

An active teacher, Etezady has taught at the Interlochen Arts Camp, Yale University, Saint Mary's College, and the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam. She has given masterclasses at Holy Cross College, the Juilliard School, and the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival.

Etezady holds academic degrees from Northwestern University and Yale University, and she has worked intensively with numerous composers, including William Bolcom, Martin Bresnick, Michael Daugherty, and Ned Rorem. She completed her doctorate at the University of Michigan in March, 2005.

Shell and Wing

David Biedenbender (davidbiedenbender.com)

My sons, Izaak and Declan, have profoundly changed and shaped the way I see the world.

I initially set out to write a collection of vignettes about them, about childhood—a way to capture the beautiful, tender, and often silly and hilarious moments of their lives, but, my plans suddenly shifted after yet another all too common incidence of violence against children. In response to this violence, I felt compelled to respond in some way—to respond to my fear of sending my sons out into this violent world. *Shell and Wing* emerged as a collaboration and a response to these parental impulses with my friend and fellow father, poet Robert Fanning. Robert's response to our conversation—a poem in two stanzas—gave voice to the ambiguity, the conflict I feel as a parent—this profound longing to protect my children coupled with the knowledge that I must also let them go.

The first poem is in a parent's voice—my voice—and the second poem is in a child's voice—that of my sons. Musically, the first movement is a sort of fragmented lullaby interwoven with a distorted memory of Robert Schumann's *T_r_ä_u_m_e_r_e_i_* (Dreaming/Reverie) from *Kinderszenen* (Scenes from Childhood). Schumann's harmonies are pulled and stretched until they resemble only a distant echo of the original. The second movement begins with solo piano, distant and aching that transforms into a quiet, dream-like duet for the soprano and vibraphone. The child's song grows and builds, underpinned by a chaconne—a repeated chord progression—and eventually becomes the same song heard in the first movement, the parent's song. (David Biedenbender)

David Biedenbender (b. 1984, Waukesha, Wisconsin) is a composer, conductor, performer, educator, and interdisciplinary collaborator. David's music has been described as "simply beautiful" [twincities.com], "striking" and "brilliantly crafted" [[Times Argus](#)] and is noted for its "rhythmic intensity" [[NewMusicBox](#)] and "stirring harmonies" [[Boston Classical Review](#)]. "Modern, venturesome, and inexorable...The excitement, intensity, and freshness that characterizes Biedenbender's music hung in the [air] long after the last note was played" [Examiner.com]. He has written music for the concert stage as well as for dance and multimedia collaborations, and his work is often influenced by his diverse musical experiences in rock and jazz bands as an electric bassist, in wind, jazz, and New Orleans-style brass bands as a euphonium, bass trombone, and tuba player, and by his study of Indian Carnatic music. His creative interests include working with everyone from classically trained musicians to improvisers, acoustic chamber music to large ensembles, and interactive electronic interfaces to live brain data.

David has had the privilege of collaborating with many renowned performers and ensembles, including [Alarm Will Sound](#), the Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra, the [PRISM Saxophone Quartet](#), the [Stenhammar String Quartet](#) (Sweden), the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the [Aspen Contemporary Ensemble](#), the [United States Navy Band](#), the [Philharmonie Baden-Baden](#) (Germany), [VocalEssence](#), the [Eastman Wind Ensemble](#), the [Music from Copland House Ensemble](#), Detroit Symphony Orchestra bass trombonist [Randall Hawes](#) and pianist [Kathryn Goodson](#), the [Juventas New Music Ensemble](#), the Washington Kantorei, the [Atlantic Chamber Ensemble](#), the [Boston New Music Initiative](#), [Ann Arbor Dance Works](#), [Composer's Inc. \(San Francisco\)](#), and the [Grand Valley State New Music Ensemble](#).

Recent recognition for David's work includes the 2018 Rudolf Nissim Prize for *Cyclotron*, the 2019 Sousa/Ostwald Award, two ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards (2011, 2012) and the 2012 [Suzanne and Lee Ettelson Composers Award](#). His music has been heard in many diverse venues, including Carnegie Hall, [Gaudeamus Muziekweek/TivoliVredenberg](#) (Netherlands), Symphony Space (New York City), the Smithsonian Museum, the German Embassy (Washington, DC), the Antonín Dvořák Museum (Prague), the Old First Church (San Francisco), Harris Hall ([Aspen Music Festival](#)), the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Hill Auditorium (Ann Arbor, MI), as well as at numerous

universities and conservatories, and it has been broadcast on NPR stations around the country, including on WNYC's [Soundcheck with John Schaefer](#) and on *Center Stage from Wolf Trap*. David's music can also be heard on many commercially available recordings, including on Naxos, XAS, Summit, Cobra, GIA, Centaur, Bright Shiny Things, and Innova record labels, among others. Recent and upcoming commissions and projects include works for [yMusic](#), the [New York Virtuoso Singers](#), the [Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music](#), San Francisco Symphony principal trombonist Tim Higgins, the Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra, the Edge Ensemble, the [Sinta Saxophone Quartet](#), the [Akropolis Reed Quintet](#), Kevin Sedatole and the Michigan State University Wind Symphony, and the [Garth Newel Piano Quartet](#).

In addition to composing, David is a dedicated teacher. He is Associate Professor of Composition in the [College of Music at Michigan State University](#), and he previously taught composition and theory at Boise State University, Eastern Michigan University, Oakland University, Madonna University, the Music in the Mountains Conservatory, and the [Interlochen Arts Camp](#). He has also taught an interdisciplinary course in creativity and collaboration in the [Living Arts](#) program at the University of Michigan. His composition students have achieved regional and national recognition for their creative work, including numerous awards and acceptance into renowned summer music festivals and undergraduate and graduate composition programs.

He received the Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degrees in composition from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor and the Bachelor of Music degree in composition and theory from Central Michigan University. His primary musical mentors include [Evan Chambers](#), [Kristin Kuster](#), [Stephen Rush](#), [Michael Daugherty](#), [Bright Sheng](#), [Christopher Lees](#), [David R. Gillingham](#), José Luis-Maurtua, and John Williamson. He has also studied at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in Uppsala, Sweden with [Anders Hillborg](#) and [Steven Stucky](#), the Aspen Music Festival and School with [Syd Hodkinson](#), and in Mysore, India where he studied South Indian Carnatic music, focusing on the mridangam with Vidwan G.S. Ramanujan.

Audio examples of HAVEN available at: www.haventrio.com

TEXTS

Three Portraits

Kieren MacMillan

Text: Dana Gioia

Speech From A Novella

Every night I wake and find myself
Alone in this strange bedroom. Always
puzzled,
I walk into the hallway, blinking at the lights

Photograph of My Mother As A Young Girl

She wasn't looking
when they took this picture:
sitting on the grass
in her bare feet

And somehow know I'm on the highest floor
Of an enormous mansion full of people.
Then leaning on the bannister I hear
The noise of a party down below,
And sad, slow music drifting up the stairwell
Like one last waltz that an exhausted band
Will play to satisfy an audience
That won't go home. Curious, I descend
The elegantly curving staircase, finding
Each floor darker and more crowded, people
Everywhere: on the landing, in the corridors,
Some staring, others arguing, most so drunk
They don't even notice that I'm there.

Then someone calls, "Mary, come down,
come down,
And dance with us!" I try to answer him,
But it's so dark and crowded I can't see
The bottom yet, and I keep walking down
Until the music, laughter, cheap perfume,
The shouting people, all the smoke from
cigarettes
Makes me so dizzy I could faint, and still
He calls me, "Mary, come down, come
down,"
And as I reach for him, the voices pause,
The music stops, and there is nothing there
But one voice laughing in another room.

wearing a cotton dress,
she stares off to the side
watching something on the lawn
the camera didn't catch.
What was it?
A ladybug? A flower?
Judging from her expression,
possibly nothing at all,
or else
the lawn was like a mirror,
and she sat watching herself,
wondering who she was
and how she came to be there
sitting in this backyard,
wearing a cheap, white dress,
imagining that tomorrow
would be like all her yesterdays,
while her parents chatted
and watched, as I do,
years later,
too distantly to interfere.

The Country Wife

She makes her way through the dark trees
Down to the lake to be alone.
Following their voices on the breeze,
She makes her way. Through the dark trees
The distant stars are all she sees.
They cannot light the way she's gone.
She makes her way through the dark trees
Down to the lake to be alone.

The night reflected on the lake,
The fire of stars changed into water.

She cannot see the winds that break
The night reflected on the lake
But knows they motion for her sake.
These are the choices they have brought her:
The night reflected on the lake,
The fire of stars changed into water.

Hardwired for Optimism

Roshanne Etezady

Text: Caroline Pettit Pinet

Six Women Laughing

Backdrop: spirit mountains,
Rustling trees, sounds and scents
Of late spring. Evening sun
Squanders deepest crimson.
To this we drink and to our lives
Come together fleetingly and full.
Birds flash at the feeder, call
Of an Eurasian dove, an enormous
Bee bumps into the glass.

She launches into story
And we with her.
It's like catching the perfect
Wave in unison:
The swell, the timing,
The exquisite crescendo,
The ride down.
A riot of laughter,
Crash of water and foam,
All six of us swimming
Floating, playing
In a gorgeous, heaving ocean.

In Montsouris Park

He is what he is,
The old man hunched
On the bench.

They say the French
Touch more,
But here

Only shadows
Grove for each
Other, slip,

While people
Avoid people
Rather well.

But he
Tips back his head,
Places a crumb

Between his lips
And, quick as thought,
A pigeon alights,

Takes it from them
In its beak,
Brushes

The flesh of
Loneliness with
Something like a kiss.

<p>Rite/Right of Spring Late April. The fourth storm hits. It snows silently, wetly, persistently. We touch each other where it matters. I eat a large breakfast, egg, mushrooms, Toast, play Stravinsky. What is right Is here. I think of the shocked French Concert-goers at the premier walking Out of the hall in droves. Stravinsky's wild locomotive Drives on. Here too Spring drives urgently and Right on Under the shrouded earth.</p>	<p>Hardwired for Optimism? <i>(Always Look on the Bright Side of Life, Eric Idle, Monty Python's Life of Brian.)</i> Frontal cortex, Hippocampus, Amygdala. The tune that sings In my brain Also sang in yours- A congruence of tides- I don't know why. Today I frolicked with a black dog, and a white dog in icy shards and snow. Tomorrow I'll die. Amygdala, Hippocampus, Frontal cortex. Sing that song again— The brain's mad And hopeful refrain,</p>
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To My Own Heart (who refuses to come home from Brooklyn....)

Amy Beth Kirsten

Text: Estefania Mitre

you deserve a lover who looks at you like maybe you are a bourbon biscuit... a lover who makes you feel safe, who can consume this world whole if he walks hand in hand with you; someone who believes that his embraces are a perfect match for your skin... you deserve a lover who wants you disheveled, with everything and all the reasons that wake you up in haste and the demons that won't let you sleep.

SHELL AND WING

David Biedenbender

Text: Robert Fanning

I. SHELL

I hold you, breath beneath my skin, a nest of flesh. No world can break you here. Shadows feather the shell. If you fly, you'll never go far. I dream my body border and sky, my heart an aviary. In my sleep, you wake. I hold you. Breathe a nest beneath my skin, flesh no world can break.

Now, the season's errant and astray; coiled rage hisses to strike. Hate leaks into vine and branch, river and vein. So, song in me, rise. May death take no air I hold. You, my breath beneath. My skin a nest of flesh. No world can break you. Here, shadow. Feather, never go. I'm a shell if you fly. Fly far.

II. WING

You dream you hold me in your nest of breath. Before they lifted me from mingled blood, I rose, a song within your feathered sleep for centuries. Your veined branches mapped my lidded eyes. A tree you dream you hold. In your nest of breaths before me. They lifted me from you to veil the sky. I flew through your death in learning to fly. No world bears us. Though we slip our nets of wing and flesh, may love keep you, this dream you hold in your nest of breath, before they lift me from mingled blood. I wrote your song within. My feathered sleep.