

#### I. Kyrie Eleison I

Liturgical text from the Catholic Mass Kyrie eleison [Lord have mercy]

#### II. Nav. Lord, not thus!

by Oscar Wilde (1854–1900). From Poems (1882 version). Sonnet on hearing the Dies Iræ sung in the Sistine Chapel

Nay, Lord, not thus! white lilies in the spring, Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove, Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love Than terrors of red flame and thundering.

The hillside vines dear memories of Thee bring: A bird at evening flying to its nest, Tells me of One who had no place of rest: I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.

Come rather on some autumn afternoon, When red and brown are burnished on the leaves, And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,

Come when the splendid fullness of the moon Looks down upon the rows of golden sheaves, And reap Thy harvest: we have waited long.

## III. Nebeltag

by Frida Schanz (1859-1944) Nebeltag

Der graue Herbst geht um.
Das Lachen scheint verdorben;
die Welt liegt heut so stumm,
als sei sie nachts gestorben.
Im golden roten Hag
brauen die Nebeldrachen;
und schlummernd liegt der Tag.
Der Tag will nicht erwachen.

Foggy Day
[Grey autumn haunts us.
Laughter seems tainted;
the world is as silent today
as though it had died last night.
In the red-gold hedge
fog monsters are brewing;
and the day lies asleep.

The day will not awaken.]

#### IV. Di me non pianger tu by Petrarch (1304-1374) Canzona no. 279

Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde mover soavemente a l'aura estiva, o roco mormorar di lucide onde s'ode d'una fiorita et fresca riva.

là 'v'io seggia d'amor pensoso et scriva, lei che 'l ciel ne mostrò, terra n'asconde, veggio, et odo, et intendo ch'anchor viva di si lontano a' sospir' miei risponde.

"Deh, perché inanzi 'I tempo ti consume? - mi dice con pietate - a che pur versi degli occhi tristi un doloroso fiume?

Di me non pianger tu, ché' miei dí fersi morendo eterni, et ne l'interno lume, quando mostrai de chiuder, gli occhi apersi"

[If the birds lament, or the green leaves move gently in the summer breeze, or soft murmurs of the clear waves are heard from a fresh flowering river-bank,

where I sit thinking of love and writing, then I see her whom heaven shows, earth hides, and I hear and understand that she still lives, though far away, responding to my sighs.

"Ah, why are you so aged before your time?" she asks with pity, "why does a sad stream always flow from your grieving eyes?

Don't weep for me, my days, in dying, became eternal ones, and when the light within seemed to darken, my eyes opened."]

#### VI. Christe eleison

Liturgical text from the Catholic Mass Christe eleison [Christ have mercy]

#### VII. Pagtulog na, Nene Filipino (Visayan) Folk Song

Pagtulog na, Nene; akon ka ambahan Malinong nga langit masadya ang bulan Nene patamisa imong katulogon Nene lupad sa pakpak sang dalamgunanon

[Go to sleep, child; I'll sing for you The sky is calm, the moon is bright My child, sleep sweetly My child, fly on the wings of dream]

#### VIII. Go and Die

by Jalâluddin Rumi (1207-1273) interpolated from several translations by the composer

#### Ghazal 636

Go and die, go and die In this Love die Recieve the other side

Be the sky, be the sky Fear no death Soar up high

Break the tie, break the tie Unchain yourself from carnal binds

Break through the walls, break through the walls

Go and die, go and die As clouds pass by A full moon shines

Silence try, silence try Your death arrives Silence do not denv

# IX. Kyrie Eleison II Liturgical text from the Catholic Mass Kyrie eleison [Lord have mercy]

#### Ma Vie by Henri Michaux

Tu t'en vas sans moi, ma vie. Tu roules. Et moi j'attends encore de faire un pas. Tu portes ailleurs la bataille. Tu me désertes ainsi. Je ne t'ai jamais suivie.

Je ne vois pas clair dans tes offres. Le petit peu que je veux, jamais tu ne l'apportes. A cause de ce manque, j'aspire à tant. A tant de choses, à presque l'infini... A cause de ce peu qui manque, que jamais tu n'apportes.

[You're going someplace without me, my life. You're rolling away.

And I'm still waiting to make my move. You've taken the battle somewhere Abandoning me on the way.

I never followed, I stay.

Where you are leading me,

I can't plainly see.
The very little that I want,
you never bring to me.
Because of this emptiness, I want
So many things, almost the infinite...
Because of this emptiness, that you never fill.]

(translated by Valerie Smith and James Bushnik; Ma vie is used by permission from Éditions Gallimard)

### Requiem Aeternam

from the Catholic Requiem Mass Requiem aeternam [Eternal rest]

#### REQUIEM AETERNAM

In 2010, my sister-in-law suffered a fatal brain aneurysm. She was only 33 years old—my age at the time—it was incredibly hard for everyone in the family. Reeling from this tragedy, I felt the need to write a requiem for her, but I didn't want to write a standard requiem mass. I preferred to write something authentic, that reflected my own disorder and emotional chaos.

As a former Catholic and now an atheist skeptic, I understood the need to cry out to God for some kind of explanation, as her family had done, but couldn't reconcile that with my lack of confidence in the supernatural claims of religions. As a result, the project became clearer: a requiem that could encompass the mystery of death within a framework of many perspectives. For the texts, I chose writers with different points of view from diverse times and places. The score is for voice and string quartet—an intimate ensemble more capable of directly reaching the listener. Early in the process, I reached out to my friends in the JACK Quartet, knowing they could be entrusted with an important project—and an emotional one.

After some initial ideas, it took about two years before I knew what I was doing. When I continued in earnest, movement by movement, a shape began to take form which included the idea of an angelic figure (the vocalist) underpinning parts of the piece. This framing device encases episodes that comment on aspects of death and dying. Despite my own atheism, I was overwhelmed with grief and cried out to God in prayer for some kind of answer. I distilled this sentiment by employing the liturgical "Kyrie eleison." The angelic vocalist sings this desperate plea at structural points in the piece: beginning, middle and end.

The second idea was more abstract—a simple, descending harmonic progression underpinning an insistent vocal line. Seemingly simple, it became the crux of the entire score, symbolizing the persistence of life amidst adversity. This idea eventually found its way into a recomposition of a traditional Filipino lullaby "Pagtulog na. Nene."

Most of the score uses settings of poetry related to dying, death, and mourning, and grouped in two parts, Part I: Grieving and Part II: Dying. The former ruminates on grief: funeral scenes, dark emotions, and reconciliations with the departed. The latter explores the nature of dying—the long sleep, the transfiguration, and the death of the will to live.

The first part opens with a poem by Oscar Wilde. "Sonnet on hearing the Dies Irae sung in the Sistine Chapel" criticizes the dark imagery of the Day of Wrath, before considering a more optimistic tone, the sensuous beauty of nature, and the fullness of life. The poet directly engages God, telling him that the beauty of nature teaches more of "life and love" than "terrors of red flame and thundering." In a broader sense, the poem says that we should not be cowed into fear by threats of damnation, that death should not be a kind of punishment, and that we should appreciate our life on this earth, with all the beauty and wonder that it entails.

The second poem—"Nebeltag" ("Foggy Day") by Frida Schanz, a little-known German poet from the 19th Century—is more about mood, and appears in Ludwig Wittgenstein's posthumously published Culture and Value. He quotes the poem in the middle of a discussion about music and art, and cites an ambiguity: is the first line of the poem the title? If "Nebeltag" is the title, then it changes the structure. Not knowing the answer presents a dilemma for the interpreter. I decided to make "Nebeltag" the title and to begin with the word grau (gray). In this song, the mezzo-soprano color matches the text's bleak imagery, underpinned by low, loosely shifting string tones. The movement evokes a funeral on an overcast morning, with somber participants gathering to grieve.

The third poem, "Di me non pianger tu" ("Do not cry for me"), is by Petrarch. A deceased woman speaks from heaven and tells her despondent widow not to shed a tear—a beautiful, easily-relatable sentiment. The Italian text begged for a more operatic, arioso-type setting, along with a bare, proto-Renaissance musical style, in my own idiom.

Grieving ends with a short memento mori, a moment of reflection. The vocalist rests, while the quartet cycles patterns, encouraging the listener to simply meditate for a little bit.

Part II: Dying begins with a return of the angelic character pleading for mercy with "Christe eleison," this time set to brutally dissonant sonorities that metamorphose into a heavenly A-major chord in natural harmonics. This sets up the second part of the Requiem with a much higher level of intensity.

The fourth text comes from a traditional Filipino lullaby, which speaks directly to the loss our family experienced (my sister-in-law was Filipina-American). Here the text is cast as an elegiac lullaby—the mother sweetly sings her child to sleep and, in a parallel sense, releases her child to eternity. The text, combined with the music, is the heart of the Requiem. My initial idea of a descending harmonic sequence is combined with a persistent vocal line. "Pagtulog na, Nene" is the emotional core, centering love and grief in a setting that is both simple and direct.

The fifth text comes from Rumi, a medieval Persian mystic. His poem, translated as "Go and Die," speaks of a yearning for the afterlife, in what sounds like frenzied ecstasy. I made a conscious, tactical decision to shock the listener with something different—a massive tonal departure from the previous gloomy texts—wildly passionate and fast. The philosophical shift towards a positive outlook on death fit my initial thesis. I wanted to provide different perspectives and challenge the idea that a musical exploration of death should be, in some way, dogmatic.

The final text comes from Henri Michaux, a modern French poet whom I first discovered in Lutoslawski's Trois Poems d'Henri Michaux. "Ma Vie" ("My Life") is full of ennui, and expresses his feeling that his life is unfulfilled. The poet, set in second-person, speaks directly to a personified life, that has left him wanting more. The poem doesn't necessarily speak of death, but there is a dying of spirit, a feeling that one has been left to die dissatisfied and alone. Here, the string quartet sinks and wallows in wistful grievances with specially tuned color chords that languish in the grip of a sustained resonance.

The poem is placed between the final iterations of the angelic figure as she reprises "Kyrie eleison." An expanded tract builds to an ecstatic climax, persistently repeating the liturgical phrase over pulsating, oscillating chords in just intonation. For me, the use of these harmonies is something special, a key to a transcendent musical world in which one can briefly catch a glimpse of the divine.

What do I hope to accomplish with the Requiem? Outside of a memorial offering, other people should have the chance to meditate upon the mysteries of death. Every once and awhile we ought to sit with these thoughts, without fear or trepidation, and savor the life we have.

#### **DOPAMINE**

In 2007, I sat down to compose an experimental string quartet for my friends, the JACK Quartet. Obsessed with microtonality, I came up with a scheme to create a microtonal string quartet. I had the entire quartet use an unusual tuning, in which natural harmonics would in turn produce an array of pitches that could be reliably reproduced just like a microtonally tuned keyboard. Some of the strings would be tuned to the standard pitch (one per instrument), so that the player could play melodies on that string in the conventional equal temperament tuning system.

Composing the quartet was made easier by setting the pitches in the composing software, Sibelius, so that I could hear the actual microtonal intervals. Working with two scores—one that displayed the sounds, and one that showed the notes and fingerings—was a hassle, but turned out to be necessary and even enjoyable. The process was so engaging that I wrote the piece in about ten days. Working day and night, I couldn't stop—I was addicted! I blame it on the dopamine rush.



# BIOGRAPHIES

The music of Jeff Myers (b.1977) has been called "striking...and harmonically rich" by the New York Times and "brilliant and powerful" by The Classical Voice of New England. He was hailed as a "gifted young composer" by New York Times critic Anthony Tommasini for the Fort Worth Opera staging of his "engrossing" opera Buried Alive. His The Angry Birds of Kauai was commissioned, premiered and recorded by Grammy award winning violinist Hilary Hahn and pianist Cory Smythe (see 'In 27 Pieces: the Hilary Hahn Encores' album).

Other notable collaborators include New York City Opera (Maren of Vardø at VOX 2011), Beth Morrison Projects, Orchestre National de Lorraine (after Escher), New World Symphony (Roaring Fork), JACK Quartet (dopamine and Requiem Aeternam), pianist Ralph van Raat (Three Sketches), violinist Yuki Numata Resnick (Metamorphosis, Six Sketches and Kulintang Suite), and pipa virtuoso Yang Jing (Turtle and Rat, from her 'Elements' album).

He has collaborated with librettist Royce Vavrek on two operas (The Hunger Art and Maren of Vardø) and librettist Quincy Long on a one-act opera (Buried Alive) for American Lyric Theater (premiered at Fargo-Moorhead Opera in 2014). Several projects have been inspired by island themes, including E---- (for loadbang ensemble), He mele no kane (for soprano Rachel Schutz and pianist Jon Korth), The Hula-Pa-ipu (for One Quiet Plunge), Wizard Island (for Music in the American Wild), and the song cycle Islands of Death (for Duo Cortona). Other songs include new Jennifer de Guzman settings such as Boy (for mezzo Anna Laurenzo) and Advice to a Migraineure (for Ekmeles). Myers recently finished a new Poe-inspired chamber opera (The Embalmer's Daughter) with librettist Quincy Long.

Myers' music has been played at Carnegie Hall, Library of Congress, Disney Concert Hall, Kimmel Center, Darmstadt, Het Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, Bard College, Institute for Advanced Study, Le Poisson Rouge and many others. He has received awards from The American Academy of Arts and Letters, BMI, and ASCAP, as well as fellowships from the Yale Institute for Musical Theater, Aspen Festival, Tanglewood, Festival Acanthes, Atlantic Center for the Arts, and grants from The Ditson Fund, NYSCA, MetLife, The Fromm Foundation and many others.

In 2011 and 2012 he served as composition faculty at the University of Hawai'i. He holds degrees from San José State University, the Eastman School, and University of Michigan, where he studied with Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Betsy Jolas, and Michael Daugherty. Originally from the San Francisco Bay Area, Myers currently resides in New York City.

jeffmyersmusic.com

Hailed by The New York Times as "our leading new-music foursome", the **JACK Quartet** is one of the most acclaimed, renowned, and respected groups performing today. JACK has maintained an unwavering commitment to their mission of performing and commissioning new works, giving voice to underheard composers, and cultivating an ever-greater sense of openness toward contemporary classical music. The quartet was selected as Musical America's 2018 "Ensemble of the Year", nominated for GRAMMY Awards for recordings in 2018 & 2022, named to WQXR's "19 for 19 Artists to Watch", and awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Through intimate relationships with today's most creative voices, JACK embraces close collaboration with the composers they perform, leading to a radical embodiment of the technical, musical, and emotional aspects of their work. The quartet has worked with artists such as Julia Wolfe, George Lewis, Chaya Czernowin, Helmut Lachenmann, Caroline Shaw, and Simon Steen-Andersen, with upcoming and recent premieres including works by Tyshawn Sorey, John Luther Adams, Clara lannotta, Philip Glass, Catherine Lamb, Wadada Leo Smith, Amy Williams, and John Zorn. JACK's all-access initiative, JACK Studio, commissions a selection of artists each year, who will receive money, workshop time, mentorship, and resources to develop new work to be performed and recorded by the quartet.

Committed to education, JACK is the Quartet in Residence at the Mannes School of Music, where they provide mentorship to Mannes's Cuker and Stern Graduate String Quartet. They also teach each summer at New Music on the Point, a contemporary chamber music festival in Vermont for young performers and composers, and at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.

JACK has long-standing relationships with the University of Iowa String Quartet Residency Program, where they teach and collaborate with students each fall and spring, as well as with the Lucerne Festival Academy, of which the four members are all alumni. Additionally, the quartet collaborates with young composers at schools including Columbia University, Harvard University, New York University, Princeton University, and Stanford University.

Comprising violinists Christopher Otto and Austin Wulliman, violist John Pickford Richards, and cellist Jay Campbell, JACK operates as a nonprofit organization dedicated to the performance, commissioning, and appreciation of new string quartet music.

jackquartet.com

Rachel Calloway brings versatility and compelling insight to stages worldwide. Her work has been praised by the New York Times for "penetrating clarity" and "considerable depth of expression" and by Opera News for her "adept musicianship and dramatic flair." A dedicated interpreter of new music, Ms. Calloway has premiered hundreds of solo and chamber music works. Recent and upcoming premieres include music by Augusta Read Thomas, John Zorn, Robert Xavier Rodriguez, David Garner, Gabriela Lena Frank, Christopher Cerrone, and Annika Socolofsky. She collaborates with premiere ensembles including Third Coast Percussion, JACK Quartet, the Amernet Quartet, and Ensemble Signal.

She has appeared in concert with the Orlando Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Series, Charleston Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, Berkeley Symphony, Ojai Festival, San Francisco Girls' Chorus, BAM Next Wave Festival, Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival, Cal Performances, and Lincoln Center Festival. Ms. Calloway made her European operatic debut as Mrs. Grose in The Turn of the Screw at Opéra de Reims, Athénée Théâtre Louis-Jovet (Paris), and Opéra de Lille. She has performed with the late Lorin Maazel at the Castleton Festival in Virginia and at Opera Philadelphia, Tulsa Opera, Central City Opera, Gotham Chamber Opera, The PROTOTYPE Festival, and the Glimmerglass Festival.

Ms. Calloway serves on the faculty of the University of South Carolina as Assistant Professor of Voice and Director of Spark: Music Leadership at Carolina. She joined the faculty of the Cortona Sessions for New Music (Italy) in 2014 and Summer Performing Arts with Juilliard in 2016. Ms.Calloway holds degrees from The Juilliard School (BM) and Manhattan School of Music (MM) and can be heard on Albany Records, Tzadik Records, BCMF Records, and Toccata Classics.

rachelcalloway.com

