



COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
BAILEY
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MUSIC

Words, Music, Memory:
(Re)presenting Voices
of the Holocaust

Sept. 19, 2021 | 3 p.m.

Recital Hall,
Room 109 (Music Building)



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY

[MusicKSU.com](https://www.musicksu.com)

Dr. Bobbie Bailey

School of Music

**Welcome to the Bailey School of Music
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A student-centered academic community on the move, we are passionate about learning through transformative musical and educational experiences. Music engages, heals, elevates, and inspires. The Bailey School of Music's talented students, expert faculty and dedicated staff connect and empower people near and far, and, in so doing, work to improve the world.

Nestled in the Kennesaw State University College of the Arts, the Bailey School of Music enjoys an extraordinary ecosystem of artistic expression and scholarship. Therefore, music students enjoy both distinctive personal attention and the resources of a thriving, large public university. What's more, our Kennesaw and Marietta campuses breathe and contribute to the dynamic cultural, economic, and geographic assets of metro Atlanta.

Music makes for a fabulous journey! Here, you'll find a world of sounds, ideas, and possibilities on the stage as in the classroom. Let us hear from you as we shape extraordinary futures together.

Jesús Castro-Balbi, D. M. A.
Director and Professor
Dr. Bobbie Bailey School of Music

where PASSION is *heard*

THE MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

The Museum of History and Holocaust Education (MHHE) at Kennesaw State University presents public events, exhibits and educational resources focused on World War II and the Holocaust in an effort to promote education and dialogue about the past and its significance today.

Through educational dialogue about World War II and the Holocaust, our programs emphasize:

- Multiple and complex human experiences
- Ethical and political consequences
- Respect for difference and diversity of life
- Acceptance of civic and personal responsibility

Established in 2003, the MHHE comprises one unit within the Kennesaw State University Department of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books (MARB), under the leadership of Dr. Catherine Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University.

Meet History **FACE** to **FACE**
historymuseum.kennesaw.edu





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LORI LAITMAN

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Yid, du partizaner

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LAURENCE SHERR

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LORI LAITMAN

In Sleep the World is Yours

I. Lullaby

II. Yes

III. Tragedy

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Jeanette Zyko, oboe
Jeremiah Padilla, piano

Commentary
Sheena Ramirez

Audience Question and Answer

Adina Langer, Sheena Ramirez,

Laurence Sherr



PROGRAM NOTES

LORI LAITMAN (b. 1955) ***I Never Saw Another Butterfly* (1996, 2018)**

In 1995, soprano Lauren Wagner asked me to write a song cycle using texts from *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*, an astonishing collection of poems written by children from the Terezín Concentration Camp. One cannot help but be touched by the hope, innocence and truth of the poems. Around this time, I was also considering writing a piece for saxophonist Gary Louie, and the idea of using saxophone as the sole partner for the voice seemed perfect, as the sound of the saxophone could be haunting and soulful, as well as reminiscent of Klezmer music. I later created versions for clarinet and bassoon, each of which contributes its own unique timbre. The cycle has six songs, three of which are presented today.

“The Garden” was written by Franta Bass, who was born in Brno on September 4, 1930. He was sent to Terezín on December 2, 1941, and died in Auschwitz on October 28, 1944. The little boy walking along the garden path is portrayed by a weaving saxophone part with subtle rhythmic changes. Both parts build to a climax, then abruptly come to a close as “the little boy will be no more.”

“Man Proposes, God Disposes” was written by the three children who signed their name Koleba. The poem recognizes that those who were “rich before” would perish much faster in the camps than those accustomed to a harsher life. This short song employs simple melodies, and the use of vocal glissandi projects a cabaret atmosphere.

“The Old House,” also written by Franta Bass, ends the cycle. The barren image of the deserted house is captured by the saxophone repeatedly playing one note, like a bell tolling. As the poet recalls happier days, the voice and saxophone become more expressive and expansive in range, but then return to the sparse opening texture. The phrase “rotting in silence” is repeated sequentially three times, descending to bring the cycle to a close with the voice alone, whispering.

LORI LAITMAN

The Ocean of Eternity (2017)

In February of 2016, Michael Couper approached me about composing a piece for soprano, saxophone and piano. For the text, we turned to the poetry of the great German/Sri Lankan poet Anne Ranasinghe, whose words we both admired, and settled on her *Four Stanzas on Mortality*. These poems reflect on life and death with precise and exquisite language.

Anne was born in 1925 to a Jewish family in Essen, Germany. She witnessed Kristallnacht and the burning of her town's synagogue before her family sent her to live with an aunt in England. As a result, she survived, but her family in Germany all were murdered by the Nazis.

Anne completed her schooling in England, training as a nurse. She met and married a Sri Lankan doctor, and after the war, moved with him to Sri Lanka. She raised 7 children, four of her own and three from her husband's prior marriage. Anne began writing in the late 1960's, and continued to do so until her death, at the age of 91, in December of 2016.

The first song, from which the cycle takes its name, opens with a plaintive oboe solo. Circular in nature, this motif descends in range and is reflective of the cycle of life. The theme is first echoed in the piano, and the voice.

The second song, "Futureless," has several distinct sections. Opening repetitions move to a livelier section as ties between past and present are delineated. As the matriarchs of the past are invoked, I employ modal harmonies to create an ancient-sounding atmosphere. The song concludes with a sparse texture, commenting on the desolate nature of the text.

"The Morning was Blue" immediately provides a contrast with its lively tempos, as the narrator recalls the happier times of earlier days. Word painting is used to portray the strident calls of the gulls, and then again, as in the prior song, the texture thins, as the narrator focuses on the inevitability of death.

The last song, "Wild Flowers," speaks of how wild flowers will blossom from our ashes - a beautiful thought. I freely intersperse the opening "ocean of eternity" theme throughout this song. The oboe ends the cycle with one last iteration of the theme.

I composed the cycle between April and September of 2017. The premier took place at Scorca Hall at the National Opera Center in New York City on February 9, 2019, with soprano Yungee Rhie, saxophonist Michael Couper, and pianist ChoEun Lee - who jointly commissioned the work.

LAURENCE SHERR, arr.

***Yid, du partizaner* (2015; rev. 2021)**

Shmerke Kaczerginski (1908–1954) was active as an archivist, poet, and youth leader in the Vilna ghetto. After fleeing with other Jewish partisans just before the 1943 Nazi liquidation of the ghetto, he eventually joined a Soviet partisan unit in the Lithuanian-Belorussian forests. For his fellow Jews in that unit, he created *Yid, du partizaner* by writing emboldening Yiddish lyrics to a Russian song he likely encountered in the forests. The lyrics speak of survival and revenge, and indeed, Kaczerginski participated in the liberation of his home city of Vilna in 1944. Immediately after the war, he worked assiduously to collect songs of the ghettos, camps, and partisans. These were published in several collections, most notably his comprehensive anthology *Lider fun di getos un lagern* (Songs from the Ghettos and Camps).

LAURENCE SHERR

***In the Free Forests* (2021)**

The creation and singing of songs were important and widespread activities among persecuted groups during the Holocaust. The songs served many purposes, such as expressing feelings, encouraging resilience and resistance, establishing identity, strengthening faith and courage, lamenting loss and current circumstances, and longing for earlier and better times. This sonata-form composition uses Shmerke Kaczerginski's partisan song *Yid, du partizaner* (Jew, You Partisan) as the first theme. The title is taken from the song's lyrics.

In choosing Kaczerginski's song as an historical source, I wanted to honor his work and help listeners become familiar with his life and contribution. He and the other partisans fought Nazi genocide and persecution, and their actions and songs illustrate courage, resistance, and survival amidst the tragedy of the Holocaust.

LORI LAITMAN

In Sleep the World is Yours (2013)

In Sleep the World is Yours, with poetry by Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger, was commissioned by Mina Miller and Music of Remembrance. I composed the work between July and August 2013.

Selma was born to a Romanian Jewish family in 1924. A talented writer, she began writing poetry at age 15. Her works consist of fifty-two poems and five translations. In 1942 at age 18, Selma dies of typhus in a Ukrainian labor camp. Thanks to the dedication and love of her friends, and later her distant relatives, her poetry survived, resulting in the 2008 publication *Harvest of Blossoms*.

What I found inspiring about Selma's poetry was that she was able to speak the truth in simple but clear poetic language. Behind the apparent simplicity of her words, however, was a depth of feeling and thought, that for me, as a composer, was very exciting – because when setting a poem to music, I look for words that an audience can grasp aurally – but also for an underlying complexity, which provides me with opportunities for creating dramatic music to illuminate the text. In this respect, Selma's poems were perfect.

I chose three poems from Selma's book: "Lullaby," "Yes," and "Tragedy," which allowed me to create a cycle with a dramatic musical arc. The combination of soprano, oboe, and piano perfectly suited the mood of the poems.

"Lullaby" spotlights Selma's imagination, her capacity for love and hope, as well as her sense of foreboding, and the realization that dreams might provide the only comfort in the increasingly dark days.

"Yes" is a good example of simple surface language combined with a complicated subtext. The song progresses from a turbulent opening to a peaceful close, as Selma understands how memory will always keep loved ones close.

"Tragedy" ends the work, and her heartbreaking words reveal her reality: "to give all of yourself and realize / you'll fade like smoke and leave no trace." Yet, Selma kept writing. She knew how important the mind and imagination were when facing the unimaginable.

And how lucky for us that she did leave a trace. While one wonders how she would have grown, her beautiful poetry gives us a glimpse of a supremely intelligent, spirited, and gifted young girl.



POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS

František Bass (1930-1944)

The Garden

A little garden,
Fragrant and full of roses.
The path is narrow
And a little boy walks along it.

A little boy, a sweet boy,
Like that growing blossom.
When the blossom comes to bloom,
The little boy will be no more.

Kolébá (M. Košek, H. Löwy, Bachner)

Man Proposes, God Disposes

I.

Who was helpless back in Prague,
And who was rich before,
He's a poor soul here in Terezin,
His body's bruised and sore.

II.

Who was toughened up before,
He'll survive these days.
But who was used to servants
Will sink into his grave.

Franta Bass

The Old House

Deserted here, the old house
stands in silence, asleep.
The old house used to be so nice,
before, standing there,
it was so nice.

Now it is deserted,
rotting in silence –
What a waste of houses,
a waste of hours.

Nelly Sachs (1891-1970)

The Seeker and Other Poems

When in early summer the moon sends out secret signs,
the chalices of lilies scent of heaven,
some ear opens to listen
beneath the chirp of the cricket
to earth turning and the language of spirits set free.

But in dreams fish fly in the air
and a forest takes firm root in the floor of the room.

But in the midst of enchantment a voice speaks clearly and amazed:
World, how can you go on playing your games
and cheating time—
World, the little children were thrown like butterflies,
wings beating into the flames—

and your earth has not been thrown like a rotten apple
into the terror-roused abyss—

And sun and moon have gone on walking—
two cross-eyed witnesses who have seen nothing.

Anne Ranasinghe (1925 - 2016)

Poems - Four Stanzas on Mortality

Each yellow eyed day
Drops like a stone
In the ocean of eternity.
I built my house
By the water's edge
And I watch the wind
As it blows the sand
As it blows my marks
From the sand;
I hear the wind
Grieve in the eaves
Worry the door
And sift up the slats
Of my floor.
And the wind that is time
And the ocean death
Both sing of eternal loneliness.

* * *

Our yesterday
And our dead
Do not return. Yet
Their image lives in us.
So that I am the one
Who walked through the sea
Who worshipped the calf
The golden calf
While God brooded over the
mountain.
And I am Ruth and I am Esther
Miriam and Delilah;
In me the past and present meet
But
I am futureless.

* * *

And what then
Is there left to tell-
That the morning was blue
And crystal bright
That we often loved
In the white mooned night
(The sweet sweet touch
Of face and hand
Despite the wind
In the sand.)
But the wind
Reaps the tide,
It laps my wall -
I can hear the gulls,
Their strident call,
They are waiting
For the spoil. Then
The end, only dust,
In forgotten soil,
Or ashes in the wind

* * *

And from our bones
Wild flowers shall grow
Or gulls swoop
Where the ashes fall.

Shmerke Kaczerginski (1908-1954)

Yid, du partizaner

Fun di getos tfise-vent -
In di velder fraye,
Anshtot kaytn oyf di hent
Ch'halt a biks a nayem.
Oyf di oyfgabes mayn fraynt
Kusht mir haldz un aktsl,
Mitn biks ch'bin nit fun haynt
Fest tsunoyfgevaksn.

Veynik zanen mir in tsol,
Drayste vi milyonen,
Raysen mir oyf barg un tol
Brikn, eshalonen.
Der fashist fartsitert vert,
Veyst nit vu fun vanen -
Shturmen vi fun unter erd, -
Yidn-partizaner.

S'vort "nikome" hot a zin
Ven mit blut farshraybst im,
Far dem heylikn bagin
Firn mir di shtraytn
Neyn, mir veln keynmol zayn
Letste mohikaner,
S'brengt der nacht - di zunenshayn,
Der yid, der partizaner.

Jew, You Partisan
From the ghetto prison walls -
In the free forests,
Instead of chains on our hands
I hold a new gun.
On the exercises my friend
Kisses my neck and shoulders,
With the gun I haven't just today
Sturdily grown up.

We lack something in numbers.
Boldness we have of millions,
In hill and valley we destroy
Bridges, troop trains.
The fascist becomes shaky,
Doesn't know where or when -
A storm arises from under the earth -
Jewish-partisans.

The word "revenge" has a meaning
When it is written in blood,
Before the blessed dawn
We lead the battles
No, we will never be
The last of the Mohicans,
The night will bring - the sunshine,
The Jew - the partisan.

From the collection *Songs Never Silenced*, Velvel Pasternak, editor and arranger, with translations from the Yiddish by Lawrence Berson, published by Tara Publications, 2003. Used by permission.

Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924 - 1942)

Harvest of Blossoms, Ich Bin in Sehnsucht Eingehüllt

Lullaby

Sleep, my child, just fall asleep
please sleep, and don't cry anymore
Just look, in sleep the world is yours,
please sleep and don't cry so hard

Close your eyes and fall asleep
listen, the forest is rustling.
In sleep there is no hate and no scorn,
and in sleep you are not cold.

Sleep, my darling, and smile, my child,
listen, the river is singing.
Sleep, then the wind will sing of joy
and sing of the blossoming spring.

Sleep my child and forget your ails,
for you the day is dark.
Bright is the night when a dream cuddles
you,
so sleep my child, so sleep.

January 1941

Yes

You are so distant
As distant as a star I thought I'd grasped.
And yet you are near-
just a little dusty
like time that's past.
Yes.

You are so huge.
As huge as the shadow of that tree.
And still you're just here too-
just pale like a dream
in my bosom.
Yes.

July 6, 1941

Tragedy

This is the hardest: to give yourself away
and then to see that no one needs you,
to give all of yourself and realize
you'll fade like smoke and leave no trace.

December 23, 1941

Personnel

Sheena Ramirez, soprano and commentary
Jeanette Zyko, oboe, English Horn
Jeremiah Padilla, piano
Adina Langer, commentary
Laurence Sherr, commentary



BIOGRAPHIES

Sheena Ramirez

Sheena Ramirez, described as a “light, perky soprano” (*New York Times*), has been thrilling classical audiences all over the country and around the world. In 2018, she presented a solo voice and organ recital in the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland and participated in the Opera Studio program at the American Institute of Musical Studies (AIMS) in Graz, Austria. In 2015, she won “Best Female Voice” at the International Gilbert and Sullivan Festival in Harrogate, England, as the lead in *Patience* with the Blue Hill Troupe. She sang leading roles in the American premiers of *Olivo e Pasquale* (Isabella) and *I Due Figaro* (Inez) with New York City Opera company Amore Opera, as well as the roles of Pamina (*Die Zauberflöte*), Frasquita (*Carmen*), and Gretel (*Hansel and Gretel*). As a light opera aficionado, within the Gilbert and Sullivan canon she has portrayed *Patience* (*Patience*), Yum Yum (*The Mikado*), Mabel (*Pirates of Penzance*), Josephine (*HMS Pinafore*), Phyllis (*Iolanthe*), Zorah (*Ruddigore*), Zara (*Utopia Limited*), The Plaintiff (*Trial by Jury*), and Casilda (*The Gondoliers*).

In 2021 she will be graduating with her Doctorate in Voice Performance, Pedagogy, and Literature at James Madison University. Her dissertation topic, “Words, Music, Memory: An Exploration of Four Soprano Song Cycles by Lori Laitman Based on Poetry from Victims of the Holocaust” examines the musical choices of the composer and performing artists when creating commemorative art song. Sheena is a graduate of Oberlin Conservatory (BM) and New England Conservatory (MM).

Jeanette Zyko

Oboist Jeanette Zyko, praised by *Fanfare Magazine* and ArtsNash for her “refined playing” and “achingly beautiful lines,” enjoys an active career as a chamber and orchestra musician.

A versatile artist, Dr. Zyko has played music ranging from twentieth-century composer Louis Andriessen to Baroque composer Jan Zelenka, and her performances have taken her across the United States and abroad. As a solo and chamber musician, she has played in New Mexico, Indiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, and New York’s Carnegie Hall, as well as in Canada, France, Costa Rica, and Argentina.

Equally at home as an orchestra musician, Dr. Zyko has performed with the Nashville Symphony, Nashville Opera, Indianapolis Symphony, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Gateway Chamber Orchestra, and Paducah Symphony. She can be heard on Summit Records with Gateway Chamber Orchestra, and her performances of Mozart’s *Gran Partita* with this ensemble have earned her high praise from critics.

Prior to joining the faculty of James Madison University in 2016, Dr. Zyko held positions at Austin Peay State University and the University of Costa Rica. She received her training at the Hartt School of Music and Butler University, and she was the first oboist to receive the Doctor of Music Arts degree from Manhattan School of Music. Her teachers have included Humbert Lucarelli, Malcolm Smith, Georg Meerwein, and Stephen Taylor. Her students have won top positions in state and regional ensembles and have received performance scholarships for undergraduate and graduate programs as well as summer festivals.

Jeremiah Padilla

Jeremiah Padilla is finishing his DMA at James Madison University under the tutelage of Dr. Gabriel Dobner. He is currently serving as an adjunct instructor at James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University. As a soloist, Jeremiah has performed piano concerti with the James Madison University Orchestra, the University of Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Memphis Repertory Orchestra, and the Awit Pilipinas Youth Orchestra. As a collaborative pianist, he won the Outstanding Collaborative Lieder Pianist Award at AIMS in Graz, Austria in 2019. Jeremiah is an enthusiast of both solo and collaborative repertoire.

Laurence Sherr

Laurence Sherr is active as a composer of Holocaust remembrance music, lecturer on Holocaust music topics, producer of remembrance events, and Holocaust music educator. Performances and lectures have been given in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, England, Norway, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, and North America. His Music of Resistance and Survival Project features his *Sonata for Cello and Piano-Mir zaynen do!*, a composition that integrates Holocaust songs from the partisans, ghettos, and camps with newly composed material. The poetry of Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Nelly Sachs is featured in his compositions *Fugitive Footsteps* and *Flame Language*.

Dissemination of his work includes Music of Resistance and Survival events in Europe, Australasia, Israel, and the US; a Keynote Address and composition performances at the Recovering Forbidden Voices international conference in New Zealand; a lecture and performance at an international conference in Leeds, England; lectures and concerts in Prague; and a workshop on teaching music and the Holocaust at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. His concert and educational activities in Germany, produced in collaboration with the children of the generation who persecuted his mother's family, led to reconciliation and healing. He developed the global-citizenship course Music and the Holocaust.

Dr. Sherr is Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music at Kennesaw State University. He has been awarded numerous prizes, grants, and fellowships. International performances of his work have been given in Austria, Holland, Switzerland, Turkey, Japan, Canada, and Mexico, and CDs released by labels in Europe and the U.S. include his compositions.

ksuweb.kennesaw.edu/~lsherr/

Adina Langer

Adina Langer has served as the curator of the Museum of History and Holocaust Education (MHHE) at Kennesaw State University since 2015. A 2009 graduate of the Archives and Public History program at New York University, she has focused her career on interpreting traumatic historical events for diverse audiences while emphasizing the dignity and individuality of the people who experienced them. Langer also shares her experience through teaching in KSU's public history program and has publications in *History@Work*, *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*, and *The Public Historian*, among others.

Beginning at the National 9/11 Memorial & Museum in New York City, Langer has curated more than eighteen exhibits ranging from permanent installations at the MHHE to panel-based traveling exhibits shown in venues from Kingston, New York, to Casablanca, Morocco. Langer brings a storytelling sensibility to her curatorial practice and emphasizes the human voice in exhibits, digital supplements, and public programs.

Conceived in partnership with Sheena Ramirez, with whom Langer has been collaborating artistically since their undergraduate *days* at Oberlin College, *Words, Music, Memory: (Re)presenting Voices of the Holocaust* is Langer's first exhibit to foreground the role of the arts in the commemorative process. Building on ideas explored in *Anne Frank in Translation* (Spring, 2021), *Words, Music, Memory* highlights the links along the chain of commemoration that connect the past and the present and generation to generation. Like translation, commemoration involves many individual roles and affirmative acts along its trajectory, from witness, to preservation, to interpretation, to performance to appreciation.

www.artiflection.com

Lori Laitman

Described by *Fanfare Magazine* as "one of the most talented and intriguing of living composers," Lori Laitman has composed multiple operas and choral works, and hundreds of songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets, including those who perished in the Holocaust. Her music has generated substantial critical acclaim. The Journal of Singing wrote "It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music." For more information, please visit artsongs.com.

Dr. Bobbie Bailey School of Music

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