

Premiere Concert

2 p.m.
Friday, July 29, 2022

Delta Omicron Triennial Conference
Norfolk Waterside Marriott
Norfolk, Virginia

Composition Contest Winner

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission

Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity

Delta Omicron Foundation, Inc.

P R E M I E R E C O N C E R T

Composition Contest Winner

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PROGRAM

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Composition Contest Winner:

Night Songs IIIDavid Hamilton
A song cycle for baritone and piano b. 1955

The Starlight Night
A Good Night
What of the Night?
The Heart of the Night
Look Down, Fair Moon
A Clear Midnight

Augusto Gil, *baritone*
Andrew Johnson, *piano*

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission

Evolving ReflectionsJ. Ryan Garber
b. 1973

A calm hustle, no matter the chaos
2019
Unseen Friends
Resting Old Chops
Ein Eingespieltes Team

Richard Scruggs, *alto saxophone*
J. Ryan Garber, *piano*

ABOUT THE WORKS

Night Songs III

Following “Night Songs” (2002) and “This Shining Night (Night Songs II)” (2013), this set of six songs again explores the theme of the night and our relationship with the nocturnal hours.

The texts are by Gerard Manley Hopkins, Francis Quarles, Ada Cambridge, William Bliss Carman and two from Walt Whitman.

Hopkins’ sonnet “The Starlight Night” describes the importance of looking at the stars and appreciating God’s creation in one’s everyday life. The voice in the poem implores the reader to look up at the sky and observe the stars closely, even if they are often taken for granted.

Quarles’ poem “A Good Night” is a lullaby, and suggests that even the concerns of kings become nothing when sleep beckons. Although English by birth, Cambridge spent much of her life in Australia, writing poems and novels moving from religious and romantic subjects to more radical ones that increasingly showed a feminist perspective on life. Her poem “What of the Night” is descriptive of a range of things one might see or hear at night, before the arrival of dawn.

Carman was Canadian born but spent much of his living as a writer and editor in the United States. Carman’s “The Heart of Night” focuses on the stars and talks of how we observe them with “speechless awe,” and how the majesty of nature makes humanity seem small by comparison.

The final two poems are both by Walt Whitman. The brief “Look Down, Fair Moon” asks the moon to shine its light on a rather ghastly scene below - the poem refers to “the dead, on their backs, with their arms toss’d wide...” The reference is likely to be to the American Civil War, where bodies were often left uncollected on the battlefields for days. “A Clear Midnight” also ends the previous two volumes of “Night Songs” - each time set differently as a kind of personal test of how one might set a poem multiple times in different ways! This poem uses metaphor to describe the transition from an earthly corporeal life, to a spiritual one. It may also be seen as a poem to comfort those who are left behind when someone dies. The final line beautifully sums up the themes of these song cycles: “night, sleep, death, and the stars.”

New Zealand composer *David Hamilton* (b.1955) was head of music at Epsom Girls Grammar School until the end of 2001 where he conducted the award-winning girls choir *Opus*. He was Deputy

Music Director of Auckland Choral (1996-2011). He has been Composer-in-Residence with the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (1999), and at both Sing Aotearoa (2013) and the NZ Singing School (2015). He concentrates on composing while maintaining part-time involvement in music education as a composition tutor and choral conductor. He is well-known as a choral conductor, adjudicator, workshop leader and clinician.

His choral music is widely performed, and is published in the U.K., U.S.A., Germany and Finland. Works have been commissioned by choirs in Japan, England, U.S.A., Finland, Ireland and Australia. He has won composer competitions in Italy (2000) and the U.S.A. (2005, 2006 and 2007), New Zealand (2007) and the U.K. (2008). In 2007 "Hine Raukatauri," a concerto for flute and chamber orchestra, took first prize in the Haifa International Composers Competition (Israel), and in 2014 "Wairua" for solo harp took first place in the New Zealand Harp Society's competition.

In 2016 "American Triptych" took first place in a competition for the Stockton Chorale (U.S.A.). In 2017 "Are We There Yet?" for viola ensemble took first place in the Australia and New Zealand Viola Society composer's competition, and "Cling to Me" was placed third in the 4th Komos Choral Composition Competition (Bologna, Italy). In 2018 he was awarded the SOUNZ Community Commission for a new work for youth groups in Taranaki. In 2019 "Electric" for chamber ensemble was a winner in the Atlanta Contemporary Ensemble's composer's contest.

Evolving Reflections

The first movement is dedicated to Ann Anthony Jones, a past president and ardent supporter of Delta Omicron. The title "A calm hustle, no matter the chaos," is how the composer perceives Ann. The second movement, "2019," was composed in memory of Angela Holder, one of three friends who died suddenly during that year. Part of this movement is based on a setting of Psalm 23 that Ryan Garber and Holder performed together. "Unseen Friends" is dedicated to a Canadian jazz saxophonist that Garber has known for over ten years. They had many conversations about music but never met in person. The fourth movement bears no dedication, though it is a calm and reflective foreshadowing of the final movement. It serves a practical purpose of "Resting Old Chops." The final movement, "Ein Eingespiltes Team," is dedicated to Richard J. Scruggs. He and the composer have performed as the *Duo parabolique et d'ivoire* (Garber-Scruggs Duo) since 2004. The overall title of the composition comes from a newspaper article about one of their performances in Germany.

Composer *J. Ryan Garber's* music has been performed in a variety of venues in the United States and Europe. He has received awards, recognition, and special performances from five national organizations and was named "Composer of the Year" by the Tennessee Music Teachers Association in 2002. His music has been released on the Bella Musica, Vox Novus, ErmMedia, and Capstone labels.

Garber earned the B.M. and M.M. in music composition at James Madison University and the D.M. in music composition at the Florida State University. His principal teachers were John Hilliard and Ladislav Kubik. Additionally, Garber has benefited from individual insights on composing from, among others, Donald Erb, Libby Larsen, Nancy Van de Vate and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich.

ABOUT THE PERFORMERS



Augusto Gil hails from Blountville, Tennessee, and frequently performs, accompanies, teaches, conducts and adjudicates throughout the southeastern United States. He has instructed musicians seeking continuing education in several countries in Europe and Asia.

Gil earned his Bachelor of Music and certification in K-12 Music Education with double emphases in voice and piano from Carson-Newman University. In 2018, he earned a Master of Music degree in choral conducting at the University of South Carolina, where he studied with Drs. Larry Wyatt and Alicia W. Walker. He will begin work on the Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the University of South Carolina in the fall of 2022.

In his four and a half years as choral director at Meadow Glen Middle School in Lexington, South Carolina, he more than doubled participation in the choral program, and established the first cross-disciplinary celebration of Heritage Months in the Lexington County schools. He serves as assistant director of music and worship at Eastminster Presbyterian Church of Columbia and is the owner and operator of Improving Arts Academy, a private instruction and coaching studio for voice and piano students. He enjoys working with students of all ages, and leads by example in seeking opportunities for collaboration, innovation in music and excellence in performance.

Gil is the International First Vice President for Delta Omicron International Music Fraternity, and is a member of the Pi Kappa Lambda Music Honor Society, the American Choral Directors

Association and the National Association for Music Education. He is a contributing author to *Sacred Music Choral Repertoire: Insights for Conductors*, and also serves as the chairman of the board for Limited Time Only, a Columbia-based chamber choir consisting of professional musicians.

He currently lives in West Columbia, South Carolina with his husband, John Michael, and their dogs, Rose, Apollo and Tommy. When not creatively focused on music and performance, he enjoys spending time with his chosen family in South Carolina, playing board games and traveling.



As an organist, pianist, vocalist, composer, and conductor, *Andrew Johnson* plans to one day teach and inspire the next generation of performers, academics and church musicians. Johnson holds the Master of Music in organ performance from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University, where he received the Bruce R. Eicher Prize in Organ. He is currently pursuing Peabody's graduate performance diploma, continuing his studies with Dr. Daniel Aune and maintaining his post as graduate assistant in ear training.

Before moving to Baltimore, he graduated summa cum laude with the Bachelor of Music from Illinois Wesleyan University, where his primary teachers were Dr. Susan Klotzbach for organ and Dr. J. Scott Ferguson for voice and choral conducting. He served as accompanist and assistant conductor for the University Choir and as bass section leader of the IWU Collegiate Choir. The music faculty named him "Presser Scholar" and in 2020 he received the designation of Research Honors in Music for his paper on an organ mass by Jean Langlais, *Suite Médiévale: A Guide for Interpretation and Performance*. His research for this project began when he participated in Peabody's organ tour of Paris, during which he studied privately with Marie-Louise Langlais.

Johnson currently serves as organist and choirmaster at Mount Calvary Catholic Church in Baltimore, Maryland. An active member of the American Guild of Organists, he serves on the National Committee for Career Development and Support and holds the guild's Associate certification. His research has been published in *The American Organist* magazine and his arrangements are published in the Delta Omicron Songbook.

Duo parabolique et d'ivoire was founded in 2004 by composer/pianist/organist J. Ryan Garber and saxophonist Richard Scruggs. The genesis of their collaboration began with, naturally, a composition by Garber for Scruggs, "Parabolisms," for saxophone and piano. It intrigued Garber that early saxophones were parabolic, not conical as modern ones, and composed a work exploring unique aspects of the sound and expressive possibilities of these instruments. The idea was born to explore new musical aspects of this combination through performances of both established and newer works in the saxophone and piano repertoire.



J. Ryan Garber has performed in a variety of recital and concert venues as a pianist, organist and bassoonist. Currently organist/choirmaster and composer-in-residence at All Saints' Episcopal Church (Morristown, Tennessee), he also teaches music courses at Walters State Community College. Previously he taught music composition/theory, organ and bassoon at Carson-Newman University for eight years, where he was an associate professor and recipient of the excellence in teaching/leadership

and creativity awards.

As a composer he has received recognition from multiple organizations including the "Composer of the Year" award from the Tennessee Music Teachers Association. Garber's music covers most genres and is performed regularly in the U.S. and Europe. His composition, "Another Twist," was written for the eminent baritone saxophonist Linda Bangs, who recorded it on the Bella Musical Antes label.



Richard Scruggs has performed widely in America, Germany, Sweden, Poland and the Netherlands as soloist and chamber musician in concert venues and festivals such as Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall (New York City), the Alte Oper (Frankfurt), Sophiensaal (Munich), the Internationale-Ferienkurse flir Neue Musik (Darmstadt) and the Festival der Seltenen Besetzungen (Ludwigsburg).

Several gifted composers have dedicated saxophone works to Scruggs, including Werner Wolf Glaser, Cristian Marina, Ryan Garber, Mark Alan Taggart, Alan Theisen and Michael Sidney Timpson.

(continued)

He was for several years a student of the eminent saxophone soloist and pedagogue Sigurd Rascher and in 1992 earned the Doctor of Music degree from Florida State University. From 1993 to 2001 he was the saxophone instructor of the Tübinger Musikschule in Germany. He is currently an associate professor of music at Carson-Newman University in Jefferson City, Tennessee.

Scruggs plays a parabolic saxophone built in 1927 according to the original acoustical design of the inventor, Adolphe Sax.

Thor Johnson Memorial Commission



This commission honors the memory of Dr. Thor Johnson, National Patron, who died in 1975. He often served as a judge of the Triennial Composition Competition. A native of Wisconsin, he earned his degrees from the Universities of North Carolina and Michigan. After service in World War II, he became the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony beginning in 1946 and continuing for the next 11 years. He then moved to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois to accept the position of Director of Orchestral Activities. During this period he organized the Chicago Little Symphony, a touring orchestra

that was critically acclaimed.

In 1967, Johnson became the conductor of the Nashville Symphony. He also was widely known as a guest conductor with ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and the symphonies of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Rochester, and New Orleans. For many years, he was choral conductor at the Ann Arbor, Michigan, May Festival.

The son of a Moravian minister, Johnson devoted himself to the discovery and performance of Early American Moravian music and established the Early American Moravian Music Festival in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, in 1957.

Delta Omicron honored this great friend of the fraternity in 1972 with the commission of a work by Gail Kubik, "Pastorale and Spring Valley Overture," which was premiered at the Annual Peninsula Music Festival at Fish Creek, Wisconsin.