

# SHOW ME THE WAY

BARITONE

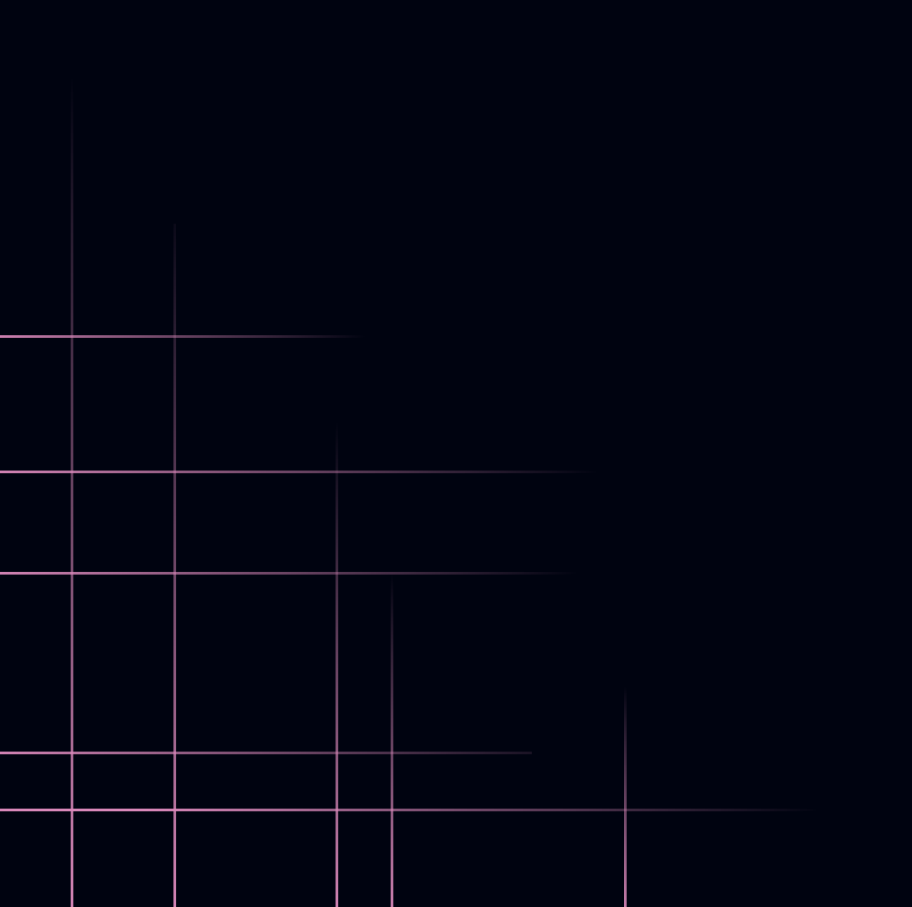
*Will*

**LIVERMAN**

PIANIST

*Jonathan*

**KING**



**WILL LIVERMAN** *BARITONE*  
**JONATHAN KING** *PIANIST*

## DISC 1

**ELLA FITZGERALD, CHICK WEBB,  
TEDDY MCRAE, AND BUD GREEN**  
(arr. Jonathan King)

- 1 You Showed Me the Way (4:22)

### **JASMINE BARNES**

**A Sable Jubilee\* (15:14)**

- 2 1. Inspiration (6:45)  
3 2. Luxury (4:42)  
4 3. Elevation (3:46)

### **FLORENCE PRICE**

- 5 I Grew a Rose (4:23)

### **RENE ORTH**

- 6 A Prayer\* (3:56)  
J'Nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano

### **MARGARET BONDS**

**Four Songs (11:47)**

- 7 1. Even in the Moment (3:04)  
8 2. Feast (1:26)  
9 3. I Know My Mind (4:11)  
10 4. What Lips My Lips Have  
Kissed (3:03)

## DISC 2

### **AMY CHENEY BEACH**

- 1 "Ah, love is a jasmine vine,"  
from *Cabildo*, op. 149 (7:13)  
Nicole Cabell, soprano  
Lady Jess, violin  
Tahirah Whittington, cello

### **KAMALA SANKARAM**

- 2 Spell to Turn the World Around\*  
(6:53)

### **FLORENCE PRICE**

- 3 Songs to the Dark Virgin (2:19)

### **LIBBY LARSEN**

**Machine Head: Ted Burke  
Poems\* (19:34)**

- 4 Rexall (5:01)  
5 My Father Intercepts My Trip  
to Another Planet (8:33)  
6 Machine Head (5:54)

### **SARAH KIRKLAND SNIDER**

- 7 Everything That Ever Was\* (7:03)  
Renée Fleming, soprano

**ALMA BAZEL ANDROZZO**  
(arr. Terry and Will Liverman)

- 8 If I Can Help Somebody (4:13)  
Terry Liverman, vocals  
Will Liverman, piano

TT: (87:38)

\*World Premiere Recording

# PERSONAL STATEMENT

by Will Liverman

*Show Me The Way* is a celebration of American song. The program was built in a spirit of collaboration and highlights women in classical music and the power of voices coming together. Every artist on this album is one who has deeply inspired me and whose legacy I aspire to be a part of. From my mom, who nurtured my love of music from day one and sings her own arrangement on the album's final track, to one of my idols and mentors, Renée Fleming, whose character and devotion to the next generation of musicians and composers has been an enormous source of inspiration to me. My mom is someone who, if she has something to say, will find a way to say it. In the 80's and 90's she wrote, sang, and produced her own music. She used to record her songs on cassette tapes, and some of my earliest musical memories were listening to those tapes of my mom singing. That experience probably sparked my love of recording, as well as the idea for this project.

When I'm building a program, it's important for me to bring in multiple perspectives, because the more voices that are involved, the more opportunities

a listener has to connect. In combining solo vocal works with duets and ensemble pieces, I'm also paying homage to colleagues who have inspired my work. Each of their artistries has had a deep impact on me and helped shape who I am as a performer, composer, and curator. I believe all of the musicians on this program feel that, as the world changes, so does music, and that we can't be rooted in what we've always done. The program features 20<sup>th</sup>-century classical composers who were pioneers in the field, such as Amy Beach and Florence Price, as well as present-day composers like Sarah Kirkland Snider and Kamala Sankaram, who are current industry movers and shakers. So, in addition to preserving important pieces of the past for future generations through this recording, we're also hoping to continue supporting contemporary legacies through commissions and recording new works.

People may resonate differently with each song, but the common thread is that we're searching for one another in a world that can oftentimes feel vast and expansive, and that, at the end of the day, we're all connected. We all have the power to help each other, to lift each other up. I hope that message shines through as you listen to *Show Me The Way*.

# PROGRAM NOTES

by Jonathan King

## YOU SHOWED ME THE WAY

by Ella Fitzgerald, Chick Webb,  
Teddy McRae, and Bud Green

Arranged by Jonathan King

Sandwiched between two world wars and ushered in by the infamous Wall Street crash of 1929, 1930s America was a decade defined by hardship, crisis, and poverty. In popular music, swing was king and the Savoy Ballroom, nestled in the heart of New York City's Harlem neighborhood, saw some of the country's greatest big bands, jazz singers, and Lindy Hoppers. One of the only dance clubs in town to have a non-discrimination policy, the Savoy also championed black artists throughout its history and hosted the likes of Chick Webb, Count Basie, and Dizzy Gillespie, among countless others. On the heels of her Apollo Theater discovery, Chick Webb hired the 18-year-old Ella Fitzgerald in 1935 to sing regularly with his house band at the Savoy,

launching her career towards international stardom and giving the world some of the era's greatest original tunes and arrangements. Such was the genesis of *You Showed Me the Way*, an original tune co-written in 1937 by Fitzgerald and the Chick Webb Orchestra. With lyrics that speak of overcoming distress, through the help and love of others, the slow swing lilt of this original chart offered hope and lightness in a time otherwise known for its despair. In this arrangement, dissonant chords and slow, plodding quarter notes not only paint the distress and searching tone of the song's text — they also create a sense of longing for those we love to show us the way in a time marked by pain, hardship, and uncertainty.

# A SABLE JUBILEE

**Text:** Tesia Kwarteng

**Music:** Jasmine Barnes

One of the first inspirations behind *Show Me The Way* was the commissioning of a new text and composition to celebrate Black Joy. As her first commissioned libretto, Tesia Kwarteng offered a poetic triptych of pride and celebration titled *A Sable Jubilee*, a text that Jasmine Barnes matched with musical brilliance and originality. The paired result is an encyclopedia of unashamed delight and elation.

## 1. INSPIRATION

Kwarteng's first poem, *Inspiration*, begins with the words "Black joy is a tapestry," and perhaps there is no better word to define it. The poem relays a survey of experiences, including "electric sliding," "sweet potato pie," "a soul train line," "hair that coils," and "cocoa butter scented hugs." Kwarteng's words leap in rapid succession as if the poet cannot contain her joy. Barnes matches this elation from the first measure of the song with a rhythmic string of repeated eighth and 16<sup>th</sup> notes broken only by leaps at the fifth and octave, as though someone is nearly bursting with excitement and anticipation before the first word is even sung. Barnes' use of 16<sup>th</sup>-note passages in the piano

is a distinguishing factor throughout this movement, sometimes with infectious syncopation, sometimes in repeated note succession, sometimes in falling sequences, and always closely connected thematically to the text it is accompanying. Barnes does not shy away from quoting famous musical material that directly relates to the text, including melodic material from the hymn, "Lift Every Voice and Sing," Frankie Beverly and Maze's "Before I Let You Go," and Al Green's "Let's Stay Together." At other times, Barnes imitates specific styles of music, including Afro-jazz, R&B, soul, and funk. Throughout, the piano is a *tour de force* of rapid movement, orchestral in its textures and layers. The contrasting smooth vocal line seems almost to be secondary to the piano in portraying emotion, floating above the flurry of accompaniment in a through-composed style, while the piano maintains structures of primary, secondary, and developed themes in a quasi-sonata style. The singer merely follows the journey, clearly exclaiming each defining moment of Black Joy.

## 2. LUXURY

Written to be performed without pause between movements, the second song shifts abruptly from the previous key of D-flat major to C major, and in a highly contrasted new soundscape that Barnes labels "surreal." Simple scalar patterns noodle for several measures until the

singer intones, “We’re proud of ourselves. Why wouldn’t we be?” Just as the first poem expresses joy in Black culture, Kwarteng’s second text expresses joy in being Black, in and of itself. “Trendsetters, history makers, creative, always imitated,” Kwarteng defines Black individuals with poignant truths, adding that “this joy is radical/Powerful and must be protected.” Throughout, Barnes sets this text with the singer at the forefront and the piano serving as accompaniment. As the song progresses, the piece’s rhythmic energy intensifies. At the singer’s exclamation, “A way of being, living, moving, breathing...” the piano begins to move into 16<sup>th</sup> note patterns that roll continuously through various key centers until the penultimate measure of the movement, when the song comes to a quick, yet calm, pause.

### 3. ELEVATION

The third movement begins with a seamless transition to A minor. The composer indicates that the piano should “shimmer” while the singer states, “A sparkling legacy/ Unapologetically shining like Opal.” Here, Kwarteng’s words move beyond joyful exclamations and toward defining Black experience as a transcendent truth. “Our darkness is no illusion/ It was designed to illuminate endless originality...” Barnes achieves a very special soundscape (with open sonorities in the left hand and 32<sup>nd</sup>-note

motives in the right) that is simultaneously dark and illuminating, just as the text suggests. The 32<sup>nd</sup>-note patterns eventually overwhelm the piano writing and move the tonal center to its parallel, A major. There is a sudden bell tone that ushers the movement into a call and response moment between voice and piano before an ecstatic praise session of syncopation and gospel riffs takes off. As Kwarteng’s words begin to take on an almost esoteric nature, Barnes’ music shifts to an obscure tonal edge over a C pedal tone, all the while still maintaining its syncopated energy. This gives way to a return of the shimmer at the movement’s beginning, as the voice quietly recedes into the piano texture on the words “creating our own.” The piano has the final word, as it arpeggiates down on a C-seven harmony before cadencing with a mediant relationship to A major; a moment that feels a unique creation and, at the same time, imparts a clear sense of finality.

## I GREW A ROSE

**Text:** Paul Laurence Dunbar

**Music:** Florence B. Price

Although a child prodigy of rare distinction, Florence Price lived a life tainted by discrimination, marital abuse, and financial hardship. Indeed, after graduating as valedictorian from Capitol High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the age of 14, Price concealed her African American roots by disguising herself as Mexican in order to attend the New England Conservatory without fear of discrimination. After returning home to Little Rock, Florence married lawyer Thomas J. Price. Following the loss of their first born at infancy, the couple raised their two daughters in the community. After several racially charged incidents, including Florence's denied membership, on the basis of her race, to the Arkansas Music Teachers Association and the horrific lynching of John Carter just blocks from their family home, Florence and her husband fled the state of Arkansas and relocated to Chicago in 1927. There, their marriage deteriorated quickly and Florence filed for divorce in 1931 after suffering significant physical abuse and

threats on her life. That any art at all, let alone the beauty of Price's rich and melodic musical language, could come from such years of hardship is a testament to her brilliance and artistry.

Combining the text of Dunbar's companion poems *Promise and Fulfillment*, Price's *I Grew a Rose* is a song that, with its repetitive nature and memorable melodic content, resembles tunes from "golden age" Broadway musicals. Price's work is more complex, however, as she intertwines the melody between the piano and voice, the two sharing more of a duet than a solo with simple accompaniment. Price also weaves in and out of keys seamlessly, painting "sun and dew" in the brighter timbre of D major, as opposed to the song's distant central key of A-flat in this lower-key setting. The piece sits in a high tessitura for the singer and requires an acrobatic voice able to manage octave leaps and arpeggiated motives. Accelerando markings aid texts of exuberance ("At last, oh joy!") and moments of silence help to bridge lines of text and character shifts. Dunbar's words about stolen beauty perhaps frame for Price relationships that were stolen away from her in violence and prejudice.



## A PRAYER

**Text:** Sara Teasdale

**Music:** Rene Orth

Sara Teasdale's *A Prayer* is a poem simple in structure yet rich in meaning, and Orth sets it in a similar vein. Scored for mezzo-soprano, baritone, and piano, the duet begins with a slow, repeating two-voice figure in the piano, outlining a C minor tonal center. The mezzo-soprano imitates the figure on a hum, creating a space altogether hypnotic and, as directed by the composer, "somber." The baritone introduces the first line of text, but it is the mezzo who completes his sentence, creating a sense of togetherness that is a distinguishing feature of this piece. Orth explores high registers in both voices to create a "storm of mirth," before a new, even more hypnotic texture begins to take shape. Maintaining evenness and

solemnity here is difficult for the pianist, as the right hand must keep a steady quarter to eighth note pulse against a left hand that plays triplets at the half note. A low bass line also emerges from this texture, creating a polyrhythmic complexity that should sound anything but. The singers continue to weave in and out of one another's sentences until they arrive together at the declamation, "let me love...". The piano part becomes turbulent as it highlights the throws of love and, per the poem, the strength needed to endure it. The rhythmic intensity recedes measure by measure, as if in waves, and the duet ends as simply as it started, this time with a D minor tonal center. Love has returned us to where we began, but now elevated to a higher plain of existence.

## FOUR SONGS

**Text:** Edna St. Vincent Millay

**Music:** Margaret Bonds

Margaret Bonds wrote six musical settings to poetry of Edna St. Vincent Millay. She compiled four of these into a cycle titled, simply, *Four Songs*. Although they never met, both women were deeply connected in their commitment to gender and racial justice as reflected in their artistic outputs. Indeed, Bonds carefully selected four poems from Millay's published collections to create a particular story: a narrative that journeys through one protagonist's loss of love, reclaiming of self, and acceptance of a new reality. This is the set's first recording in a medium voice key (using a recent edition by Hildegard Publishing Company).

### 1. EVEN IN THE MOMENT

Bonds masterfully sets a text (from Millay's sonnet collection, *Fatal Interview*) mourning a love lost. Writing in an impressionistic style, Bonds employs a repeated quintuplet arpeggiation on a C major seven chord (triad plus the note seven steps above the chord's root) in the upper register of the piano throughout her song. This might denote a kiss of warmth and romance were it not consistently accompanied by a tritone figure fixed in an eerie E minor. This kiss is void of any pleasant feeling, and is instead an icy reminder of the frost that has

killed all things once thriving. Bond's music exists in dissonant gestures, only once cadencing to a calming B major as the narrator hopes for pleasant seasons amidst the reality of winter.

### 2. FEAST

Bonds matches the rawness of Millay's poem (from her Pulitzer-winning collection, *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems*) with a driving, dissonant edge. For this ironic "Feast," Bonds creates an unhinged quasi-scherzo, hardly finding roots in tonality, with mixed meters, an atonal melodic contour, and extreme tessitura suggesting a narrator truly intoxicated by their reality of "want" and "thirst." As the narrator resigns to exist in such a state, so the short movement suddenly resolves on a calm cadence in A-flat major.

### 3. I KNOW MY MIND

The longest of the four songs, *I Know My Mind* stands as a resolute pillar that upholds Bonds' cycle as a whole. The poem (again from Millay's *Fatal Interview*) provides a character shift from despair and lament to one of decisiveness and determination in love lost. Bonds writes "baldamente con agitamento" to characterize the movement. This "boldness" is instantly realized in an unobscured minor-key tonal center and unrelenting double-dotted rhythms. Dense yet open sonorities further characterize a sense of nobility. The interpretation moves

forward as a royal procession, the narrator exclaiming, "I know my mind and I have made my choice . . . you have no voice in this, that is my portion to the end." The narrator does not deny continued interest in romance amidst self-actualization, stating, "Mistake me not / unto my inmost core I do desire your kiss upon my mouth," referencing the desert of want described in the previous movement. Still adorned in decision, the "a tempo pomposo" continues until the final open-fifth intervals in the piano, sealing one of the most arresting characterizations in song literature.

#### **4. WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED**

The A minor pillar of the previous movement is softened to its parallel A major in this tender setting of Millay's *What Lips My Lips Have Kissed* (from *The Harp-Weaver and Other Poems*). Again referencing the kiss that opened the cycle,

Bonds creates a moving conclusion to her story as the narrator gently sings, "What lips my lips have kissed . . . I have forgotten." With a lush and romantic musical sensibility, Bonds seems to reserve her most beautiful expression for the moment her narrator finally moves away from the love of others and accepts the love found only within herself. There is still a sense of melancholy in the lilting countermelody of the piano during the song's interlude, however, as the narrator reflects on the "quiet pain" that lingers from lovers past. In a final and quiet declamation, Bonds has the piano double the voice as it sings "I only know that summer sang in me / A little while, that in me sings no more." The optional high-note ending is a must for any singer who acknowledges the beauty found in moving on and the pain felt in letting go.

## AH, LOVE IS A JASMINE VINE, FROM CABILDO, OP. 149

**Libretto:** Nan Bagby Stephens

**Music:** Amy Cheney Beach

Amy Cheney Beach wrote only one opera in her lifetime, a curious one-act chamber piece scored for singers and piano trio. Penned in the summer of 1932 while on retreat at the MacDowell Colony, *Cabildo* tells the true story of smuggler Pierre Lafitte, falsely imprisoned and condemned within the New Orleans Cabildo (a traditional Spanish town hall still in existence today) during the Battle of New Orleans at the tail end of the War of 1812. In truth, General Andrew Jackson made a private agreement with Pierre and his brother Jean to assist the American army in defeating the British in return for Pierre's release. In typical operatic fashion, Stephens' libretto abandons fact and makes it the ghost of Lafitte's recently deceased lover (a fictional character), Lady Valerie, who frees him from his cell. The love duet that ensues is the excerpt we offer on this album.

Although a large portion of the opera employs distinctive Creole folk melodies and idioms, this particular duet is based on a Beach art song written decades earlier,

*When Soul is Joined to Soul*, Op. 62, and is strikingly different in character from the rest of the opera. At this climactic moment, Beach uses long sweeping melodies in the vocal lines with several indications for rubato throughout, often doubling soprano and baritone with violin and cello, respectively. The consistently pulsating subdivisions in the piano are typical to many of Beach's songs, creating a layer of impetuosity and passion. Common to the romantic era, Beach writes this duet in the complex key of G-flat major, a far departure from the G Major prologue at the beginning of the opera, perhaps to highlight the profundity of this otherworldly and clandestine meeting.

## SPELL TO TURN THE WORLD AROUND

**Text:** Kathryn Smith

**Music:** Kamala Sankaram

Wildfire devastation is not a new topic in world affairs. It has only been in recent years, however, that artistic media have been frequently engaged to bring awareness to the urgent environmental reality we now face. Kathryn Smith's poem, *Spell to Turn the World Around*, is no exception and does not shy from the brutal realities of fire and the absolute

destruction it brings. Words of brutality — “birds battered,” “feathers damp with blood,” “the firefighter’s grave” — all paint true stories of what people have had to endure battling terrifying flames. Kamala Sankaram’s setting is a poignantly honest musical representation of these harrowing words. She writes, “As a New Yorker, while I had an awareness of the devastation of the wildfires along the West Coast, Kathryn’s words really connected me to the full weight of it, of the lives (both human and non-human) hanging in the balance. Little did I know that I would write this piece accompanied by the orange skies of our own summer of wildfire in New York City, soon to be followed by a snowless winter and the hottest year on record.” Her soundscape is bleak and eerie. String plucks from inside the piano echo atonal motives Sankaram constructs by assigning numbers to the letters of the words “smoke,” “wildfire,” and “breath,” and matching those numbers to the 12 notes of the equal-tempered scale. The result is something euphonious and systematic, a feeling that leaves the listener both emotionally invested and aware of an inevitable churning that we cannot ignore.

## SONGS TO THE DARK VIRGIN

**Text:** Langston Hughes

**Music:** Florence B. Price

We know that Price set the sensual text of Langston Hughes’ *Songs to the Dark Virgin* in 1935, less than five years after her divorce. She was introduced to Hughes through their mutual friend, Margaret Bonds, who housed Price and her children after her divorce. As part of her cycle, *Four Songs from The Weary Blues*, Price set “Songs to the Dark Virgin” with a lush and dense romanticism, particularly evident in this lower-key setting of A-flat major. Price introduces a simple melody to set the first stanza of text and then modifies it slightly in the other two stanzas, almost as a miniature theme and variations. The first line of each stanza, “Would that I,” may suggest the pain of Price’s recently broken marriage. Perhaps there is a longing or an unrealized desire in her musical intention. Other words — “absorb,” “wrap,” “hold and hide” — beg a lingering and an indulgence: a fantasy the narrator should hate to depart to return to the bitter realities of a broken life.

## MACHINE HEAD: TED BURKE POEMS

**Text:** Ted Burke

**Music:** Libby Larsen

Ted Burke, an American poet, critic, and bookseller, runs an infamous used bookstore, D.G. Wills Books, in La Jolla, CA. The shop is known for its cozy interior, scholarly collections, and high-profile visitors, including the likes of Allen Ginsberg, Christopher Hitchens, Billy Collins, Gary Snyder, Irish Chang, Oliver Stone, Sean Penn, and Jim Belushi, to name a few. In many ways, to know Ted Burke is to know his bookstore and its many guests, in that his writing style is one that infuses the intelligence, artistry, and wit of each person who walks through his door. Given the particular nuance towards rhythm and jazz in his poetry (Burke is also a highly accomplished harmonica player), it is no wonder that composer Libby Larsen leaned into his works when commissioned to write a song cycle for this album. When she first conceived the work, she wrote, "For this piece I want to be inspired by our own language, our own rhythms and the way we (our culture) use ordinary, every-person objects (like a cigarette, a radio, a cardboard box you find in your garage...) to transport us into our interior selves where we articulate emotions that are

universal." The result is indeed transporting, each song revealing a unique corner of Burke's writing and the world he inhabits.

### REXALL

Larsen's first song opens with an infectious, smokey blues riff that grooves throughout most of the movement. Just five measures in, we also begin to hear a faint but distinct quote of the *Tennessee Waltz*, a popular tune by Redd Stewart and Pee Wee King that reached the height of its fame in 1950 with a recording by Patti Page. Tie into this mix the name of the poem, *Rexall*, a popular, mid-20<sup>th</sup> century American drugstore chain, and it is unmistakable, even before the singer introduces any text, that we are in the 1950s American deep south. The poem frames a moment in time where a father and son are waiting, one more patiently than the other, for a mother to return to the car from her shopping. The son wants a comic book and is on the verge of a meltdown, humorously portrayed by abrupt, dissonant major seconds in the piano's treble register. Larsen's unending blues riff in the left hand serves as a demarcation of time, like the second hand of a clock ticking, amidst the "crying jag" and "sniffles" of the son's tantrum. Time is suspended only when the father lights his Old Gold cigarette (another mid-century nod) and turns up the car radio to listen to Patti Page sing her famous tune. Here, Larsen's bass groove

halts and we enter a surreal sound-world in G major with another unmistakable quote of the *Tennessee Waltz*, perhaps a musical representation of the father's internal escape from his crying son and the waiting game he is playing with his wife. He imagines her browsing up and down the aisles, which brings him out of his fantasy waltz and back into the gnawing blues groove. "Not everything is funny or for fun," he tells his son. "Sometimes you just have to wait." The singer sings a blues note on the word "wait," obscuring the key from a minor mode to a major one, while the bass groove gets the final word, slowing to a quiet end.

### **MY FATHER INTERCEPTS MY TRIP TO ANOTHER PLANET**

In every way that Larsen's previous song setting portrays the passing of time, her second song does the opposite. Here, Burke writes an autobiographical vignette of his childhood as he plays with an old cardboard refrigerator box in his garage. Larsen's opening, marked "unbound from gravity or progression," is mesmerizing as the pitches seem pulled out of thin air in a slow, floating fashion. Eventually, we are pulled into a D pedal tone, contrasted by a repeating diminished-seventh interval in the right hand, providing an impressionistic ground for the singer to tread on. Burke's text is full of boyhood wonder, describing the holes he has cut

with his pocketknife and the ankles and outfits he can observe from his fort. Soon, the fort becomes an "ever evolving ship," and Larsen's "unbound" sound palate with fast moving 16<sup>th</sup>s at the fourth. Sextuplet repeated note figures in the right hand paint a peculiar picture of the ship's controls before a written-out doppler effect in the piano depicts the race car that the spaceship has suddenly morphed into. Whole tone patterns are heard throughout the movement, most notably when the race car suddenly changes into an airplane. Next it is a "fast train," then a "jet," or "rocket to the stars," each shift met with clever musical inventions to depict the next traveling machine. The 16<sup>th</sup>s begin to mellow as Burke writes, "back in time for Flintstones..." and soon we return to our unbound existence, as the boy opens his eyes to discover his father carrying him off to bed. Larsen quotes the Cole Porter song, *I Love Paris* as Burke describes his father singing the song's words as he drifts off to sleep. The piano cadences on what feels very much like a dominant chord as Larsen re-employs her D pedal tones, while the Cole Porter melody seems to find its tonal center in G major.

### **MACHINE HEAD**

Larsen begins her set of songs with a blues and ends with a "hard driving boogie" — the perfect musical companion to a barrage of fast-moving text: Burke's

*Machine Head* seems to find its root in beat poetry as it describes, or perhaps laments, an ever-changing world of machines. Larsen employs a chromatic 16<sup>th</sup>-note motive that rarely stops; instead, it evolves with the text by way of changing articulation, octave displacements, modulations, and other creative devices. As with a well-crafted jazz improvisation, there are moments where the text seems suddenly to adjust rhythm and even stop, just momentarily. Larsen meets these moments with a musical halt, most notably over an F-sharp-seven sonority at the grand declamation of “machines of gratuitous good looks.” These pauses are never long, however, and the incessant 16<sup>th</sup>s grow increasingly emphatic, while always remaining mechanical in nature. Spastic rhythms in the right hand begin to surface, as though the poem’s machines are beginning to short circuit. But it is the singer who is eventually overcome, exclaiming, “My machines know all my sounds, the

rhythm of bad habits they are powerless to match.” Larsen saves the highest sung note — a sustained high A-flat — for the last word of the entire cycle. The machines barrel onward and only stop when the poet runs out of text. The marriage of this boogie rhythm to Burke’s descriptive and rhythmic words creates a perfect ending to this inventive and eclectic set of songs.

## EVERYTHING THAT EVER WAS

**Text:** Tracy K. Smith

**Music:** Sarah Kirkland Snider

Snider writes, “By turns mysterious, reflective, elegiac” as the character description to begin her duet, *Everything That Ever Was*. And this spacious work is, indeed, defined by its mysterious nature and ever-slowly turning movement. Eschewing a key signature, Snider defines her sound palate more by sonority than harmonic language, often applying sequences of intervals at the third and sixth, sometimes in diatonic scalar patterns, at other times in whole tone movement. Still, the piece is rooted firmly in tonality, and may be interpreted as a ternary form, with the B section exhibiting a much more rapid form of turning than the outer sections as it sets descriptive texts such



as, “your eyes danced toward mine” and “hands . . . working a thread in my lap.” The vocal lines weave around one another throughout, at times completing each other’s sentences or telescoping text in layers as though one is echoing the other. Tracy K. Smith’s words evoke space and a shift in the understanding of time from an ever-passing inevitability to an eternal collection of moments that affect each of our presents and futures. Smith’s lyrics combined with Snider’s soundscape produce a work that’s poignant, intimate, eternal, and deeply beautiful.

## IF I CAN HELP SOMEBODY

**By Alma Bazel Androzzo**

**Arranged by Terry and Will Liverman**

A song of eternal importance and universal truth, *If I Can Help Somebody* has been cherished, performed, and recorded by artists worldwide since its commission for the National Tuberculosis Society in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed, Alma Bazel Androzzo’s hymn has been immortalized by the voices of Turner Layton, Billy Eckstein, Doris Day, Joseph Locke, and even at the hands of Liberace. Martin Luther King, Jr. ended his famous speech, “The Drum Major Instinct,” with lines from the

hymn’s text. This is said to have been the inspiration for the famous gospel setting Mahalia Jackson recorded in 1964. It is this specific interpretation that inspired mother and son duo Terry and Will Liverman’s new, heartfelt arrangement. Speaking of his mother, Will shares that “she has always paved her own way with her music and singing, and I wanted to honor her in some way on this project.” With Terry’s rich, dramatic vocal timbre and Will’s stylized playing at the keyboard, this song ends our program on a mission to pursue the good of humanity, and the prize of a life well-lived in service toward one another.



## WILL LIVERMAN

Called “a voice for this historic moment” (*Washington Post*), Grammy Award-winning baritone Will Liverman is the recipient of the 2022 Beverly Sills Artist Award and co-creator of *The Factotum* — “mic-drop fabulous good” (*Opera News*) — which premiered at Lyric Opera of Chicago in 2023.

In the 2023–2024 season, Liverman returns to the Metropolitan Opera in the title role of *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X*. He was previously seen at the Met opening its 2021–2022 season in a “breakout performance” (*New York Times*) as Charles

in Terence Blanchard’s *Fire Shut Up In My Bones*, which won the 2023 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording.

Liverman’s 2023–2024 season further includes productions with Opera Philadelphia for the world premiere of Rene Orth’s *10 Days in a Madhouse* and the Met Opera for Charles Gounod’s *Roméo et Juliette*. In concert, he joins the Lexington Philharmonic for the orchestrated world premiere of Shawn E. Okpebholo’s *Two Black Churches*, Houston Symphony’s *Carmina Burana*, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra for Brahms’ *A German Requiem*, and The Washington Chorus’ *Elijah Reimagined*, plus Dayton Opera, Caramoor, and Cincinnati Song Initiative for vocal recitals. He serves as Artistic Advisor for Renée Fleming’s SongStudio at Carnegie Hall.

Cedille Records released Liverman’s *Dreams of a New Day: Songs by Black Composers* with pianist Paul Sanchez in February 2021. The album debuted at No. 1 on the *Billboard* Traditional Classical Albums chart and was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album.

Liverman is an alumnus of the Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago and was a Glimmerglass Festival Young Artist. He holds degrees from The Juilliard School (MM) and Wheaton College in Illinois (BM).

[willliverman.com](http://willliverman.com)



## JONATHAN KING

Celebrated as a “fresh presence” and “fully alive” (*Washington Post*), Jonathan King is currently Music Director at Opera Memphis. He has recently served as Associate Conductor with The Washington Chorus and has coached with Peabody Opera Theatre at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University. King has also served as assistant conductor, chorus master, and junior lecturer with Maryland Opera Studio at the University of Maryland and has prepared choirs to work with eminent conductors including Leonard Slatkin, Marin Alsop, and Gianandrea Noseda.

“A deft and sensitive accompanist” (*Chicago Tribune*), King has served as répétiteur with the National Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Opera, Opera Baltimore, Intermountain Opera Bozeman, Opera Saratoga, Lyric Opera of Chicago’s Unlimited Series, and the Oregon Bach Festival, where he also served as assistant conductor to John Nelson during the 2018 and 2019 seasons. As a collaborative pianist, King has worked with celebrated singers including J’Nai Bridges, Michael Spyres, John Holiday, and Will Liverman. As a duo, King and Liverman have recorded with Deutsche Grammophon, Odradek Records, and Cedille Records. Together they maintain an active recital schedule and have appeared on major world stages including Wigmore Hall, the Aspen Summer Music Festival, and the Kennedy Center’s Opera House. Their album, *Whither Must I Wander* (Odradek, 2020), was named one of ten “Best Classical Recordings of 2020” by the *Chicago Tribune*, and received a Critic’s Choice Award from *Opera News*.

[Jkingmusic.com](http://Jkingmusic.com)



## RENÉE FLEMING

Renée Fleming is one of the most highly acclaimed singers of our time, performing on the stages of the world's greatest opera houses and concert halls. Honored with five Grammy Awards and the US National Medal of Arts, she has sung for momentous occasions from the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony to the Super Bowl. A ground-breaking distinction came in 2008 when Renée became the first woman in the 125-year history of the Metropolitan Opera to solo headline an opening night gala. A Kennedy Center Honoree in 2023, she was appointed by the World Health Organization as a Goodwill Ambassador for Arts and Health the same year.

Known for bringing new audiences to classical music and opera, Renée has sung not only with Luciano Pavarotti and Andrea Bocelli, but also with Elton John, Paul Simon, Sting, Josh Groban, and Joan Baez. She has recorded everything from complete operas and song recitals to indie rock and jazz. She earned a Tony award nomination for her performance in

*Carousel* on Broadway, and her voice is featured on the soundtracks of Best Picture Oscar winners *The Shape of Water* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

Renée is a leading advocate for research at the intersection of arts, health, and neuroscience. As Artistic Advisor to the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, she launched the first ongoing collaboration between America's national cultural center and the National Institutes of Health. She has presented her own program, *Music and Mind*, in more than 50 cities around the world. She is a founding advisor for major initiatives including the Sound Health Network at the University of California San Francisco and the NeuroArts Blueprint, a project of Johns Hopkins University and the Aspen Institute.

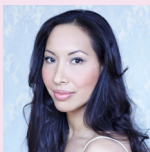
In addition to her work with the Kennedy Center, Renée has held artistic and consultancy roles for major arts institutions including the Aspen Music Festival and School, Carnegie Hall, LA Opera, and Lyric Opera of Chicago. Other awards include the Fulbright Lifetime Achievement Medal, the Polar Music Prize, Germany's Order of Merit, and France's Légion d'honneur. She holds honorary doctorates from eight leading universities.

**[reneefleming.com](http://reneefleming.com)**



## TERRY LIVERMAN

Recording artist Terry Liverman began singing in church at age five and has continued to use her voice in worship ever since. She is one of four children in a tight-knit family. Her mother, Johnetta Foreman, and father, Elder Neil Foreman, instilled a life-long love of music and encouraged her to use her gifts to sing the praises of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As a young woman, Terry became the evangelist host of "Daily Bread Broadcast" on WGPL 1350 AM on the Willis Broadcasting Network in Norfolk, VA. Career highlights include guest speaking at the Gospel Music Workshop of America in Kansas City, MO, singing on the Word Network Christian Station's Bobby Jones Gospel Show, and being featured in a singing advertisement for the Stellar Award Winning radio station "Rejoice 100.9." Terry is also a former Stellar Award Nominee with Earl Bynum and the gospel group "As We Are" and has taken her ministry on tours to Italy and Switzerland. Terry resides in Virginia Beach with her husband of 36 years, Elder Willie Liverman, Sr. Their son, Will Liverman, Jr., is an internationally acclaimed opera singer.



## NICOLE CABELL

Nicole Cabell, 2005 BBC Cardiff Singer of the World, is an exciting lyric soprano whose career has taken her to the most important opera stages and concert halls in the world.

Cabell's opera roles include Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* (San Francisco Opera), the title role in *Alcina* (Grand Théâtre de Genève), Mimi in *La bohème* (Paris Opera, Cincinnati Opera), Hanna Glawari in *The Merry Widow* (Lyric Opera of Chicago), Violetta in *La traviata* (Royal Opera House Covent Garden, San Francisco Opera), Adina in *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera), Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Metropolitan Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin), Contessa Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Grand

Théâtre de Genève), Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* (Deutsche Oper Berlin, Atlanta Opera), Giulietta in *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* (San Francisco Opera, Washington Concert Opera), Micaela in *Carmen* (Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Deutsche Oper Berlin), Leila in *Les pêcheurs de perles* (Lyric Opera of Chicago, Santa Fe Opera, Royal Opera House), Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* (Deutsche Opera Berlin, Cologne Opera), and Musetta in *La bohème* (Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Royal Opera House, Santa Fe Opera, Washington National Opera).

Her recordings include *Soprano*, an opera recital album for Decca; Léontine in Cedille's recording of Joseph Bologne's *L'Amant Anonyme*; *Silver Rain* (songs of Ricky Ian Gordon), *Chanson D'Avril*, and *Mademoiselle — Premiere Audience*, *Unknown Music of Nadia Boulanger* on Delos; Musetta in Deutsche Grammophon's *La bohème*; and the title role in Opera Rara's *Imelda di Lambertazzi*.

**[nicole-cabell.com](http://nicole-cabell.com)**



## J'NAI BRIDGES

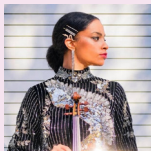
Two-time Grammy Award-winning American mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges, known for her "rich, dark, exciting sound" (*Opera News*), "plush-voiced mezzo-soprano" (*New York Times*), and "calmly commanding stage presence" (*The New Yorker*), has been heralded as "a rising star" (*Los Angeles Times*), gracing the world's top opera and concert stages.

The 2023–2024 season spotlights Ms. Bridges in the world premiere of *Intelligence* by Jake Heggie at the Houston Grand Opera. Bridges also makes her subscription debuts with the New York Philharmonic and Boston Symphony Orchestra and returns to the Metropolitan Opera in John Adams' *El Niño*.

Recent highlights include the 2022 Grammy Award-winning Metropolitan Opera production of *Akhnaten* and 2021 Grammy-winning recording of Richard Danielpour's oratorio, *The Passion of Yeshua*; performing at the Library of Congress as she received the 2022 Ruth Bader Ginsburg Woman of Leadership Award; and her sold-out Carnegie Hall recital debut.

Bridges is the recipient of a 2018 Sphinx Medal of Excellence Award, 2016 Richard Tucker Career Grant, and 2012 Marian Anderson Award. An alumna of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at Lyric Opera of Chicago, J'Nai has represented the United States at the BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition. A native of Tacoma, Washington, she earned her degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music (MM) and Manhattan School of Music (BM).

[jnaibridgesmezzo.com](http://jnaibridgesmezzo.com)



## LADY JESS

Lady Jess is a soloing member of Beyoncé's band. Jess toured with the superstar and her husband, Jay-Z (together "The Carters") in 2018 for their *On The Run II* tour; recorded and arranged with The Carters for their Grammy-nominated album, *Everything Is Love*, in 2019; and appeared in the Emmy-nominated Netflix concert film/documentary, *Homecoming*. She is a 2020 winner of the UNCSA Artpreneur of the Year award, 2020 Sphinx MPower grant recipient, and 2021–2022 fellow at The Hermitage Artist Retreat, where she debuted her suite for solo violin and electronics, *Ophelia*. She has been a guest speaker and panelist for the League of American Orchestras, Gateways Music Festival, Sphinx Organization, University of NC School of the Arts, Apollo Theater, and others. Jess is also artistic director of the Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra.

A frequent session musician, Lady Jess was concertmaster and contractor for the Oscar-nominated film *Judas and The Black Messiah*. She can also be heard on the

soundtracks of *The Lion King*, *Da 5 Bloods*, *Space Jam*, *Creed*, and more. In New York, she performs with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Composers Orchestra, and New York Pops. In 2021, she toured with the Sphinx Virtuosi. In 2023, she made her solo debut at the BRIC Celebrate Brooklyn Festival with the Chelsea Symphony.

Her artist collaborations include: Stevie Wonder, Chloe X Halle, Black Coffee, Will Liverman, Black Thought, Solange, Max Richter, Carrie Mae Weems, Terrence Blanchard, Alicia Keys, et al. Lady Jess released a premiere recording of music by Florence Price on the Naxos label with pianist Ric'key Pageot in 2021.

**IG: @ladyjessmusic**  
**LadyJessMusic.com**  
**Upchamberorchestra.org**





## TAHIRAH WITTINGTON

Tahirah Whittington is a founding member of the Ritz Chamber Players in Jacksonville, FL, and D-Composed, based in Chicago, IL. Ms. Whittington was the cellist for the *Dear Evan Hansen* National Tour (2020–2022) and for *Hamilton* in Chicago. Her television/film credits include: *Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* and episodes of *Empire*. Studio recordings include: *The Lion King* (2019, as a member of Re-collective Orchestra), Beyoncé's *The Lion King: The Gift*, John Legend's *Big Love*, and PJ Morton's *Gumbo Unplugged*. Tahirah performed the cello solo part for Rhiannon Giddens' "Cry No More," arranged by Michael Abels. Ms. Whittington received her Bachelor's Degree from The New England Conservatory and her Master's Degree in Cello Performance from The Juilliard School.

# CREDITS

**Producer** James Ginsburg

**Engineers** Bill Maylone  
Dan Nichols (Sankaram, Snider)

**Steinway Piano Technician** Richard Beebe

**Cover Photos and Layout** Jaclyn Simpson

**Cover Photo (Lady Jess)** Naliya Sabis

**Graphic Design** Bark Design

## **Recorded**

July 17–19, 2023 in the Sasha and Eugene  
Jarvis Opera Hall at DePaul University,  
Chicago, IL

August 15, 2023 in Lisner Auditorium  
at George Washington University,  
Washington DC (Sankaram, Snider)

## **Publishers**

Fitzgerald, Webb, McCrae, and Green:  
You Showed Me the Way © 1937 Robbins  
Music Corporation

Barnes: A Sable Jubilee © 2022 Jasmine  
Barnes Music

Price: I Grew a Rose © 1977 Estate of  
Florence Price

Orth: A Prayer © 2023 ReEnthroné  
Productions

Bonds: Four Songs © 2020 Hildegard  
Publishing Company

Sankaram: Spell to Turn the World  
Around © 2022 Kamala Sankaram Music

Price: Songs to the Dark Virgin © 1941  
G. Schirmer, Inc.

Larsen: Machine Head: Ted Burke  
Poems © 2022 Libby Larsen Publishing

Snider: Everything That Ever Was © 2023  
G. Schirmer, Inc.

Androzso: If I Can Help Somebody © 1947  
Boosey & Hawkes

*Show Me the Way* is made possible by the generous support of an Anonymous donor, the Robert and Isabelle Bass Foundation, Inc., and the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Fund for Vocal Recordings at Cedille Records. For a list of donors to the Fund, scan here:



Cedille Records is a trademark of Cedille Chicago, NFP, a not-for-profit organization devoted to promoting the finest musicians and ensembles in the Chicago area. Cedille Chicago's activities are supported in part by contributions and grants from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies including The MacArthur Fund for Arts and Culture at Prince, The Negaunee Foundation, Sage Foundation, Irving Harris Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. This project is partially supported by a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.

Contributions to Cedille Chicago may be made at [cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org) or 773-989-2515

CDR 90000 226 © & © 2024 Cedille Records, trademark of Cedille Chicago, NFP  
4311 N Ravenswood Ave., Suite 202, Chicago IL 60613 USA  
773.989.2515 tel • 773.989.2517 fax  
[cedillerecords.org](http://cedillerecords.org)



# CEDILLE PRODUCERS CIRCLE

Honoring the generosity and loyalty of those individuals and foundations who have supported our recordings through their repeated, major annual gifts to Cedille Chicago

Anonymous

Constance P. Beaty

Beech Street Foundation

The Steven C. Calicchio Foundation

Kristina Entner and Edward Malone

Marian and M. Carr Ferguson

Frances and Henry Fogel

Sue and Paul Freehling

Janet Gilboy and John Schmidt

Jane Ginsburg and George Spera

Susan and Sanford Greenberg

Barbara Greis and Howard Gottlieb

Irving Harris Foundation

Barbara Haws and William Josephson

Andrew and Irma Hilton Foundation

The Julian Family Foundation

Barbara Julius and Marc Silberberg

Patricia Kenney and Gregory O'Leary

Christine and Bill Landuyt

Eva Lichtenberg and Arnold Tobin

The MacArthur Fund for Culture, Equity  
and the Arts at Prince

Judy and Scott McCue

Graci and Dennis McGillicuddy

Bonnie McGrath and Bruce Oltman

Mesirow Financial

Ginger and Jim Meyer

The Negaunee Foundation

Kathleen Peratis

Rachel Barton Pine and Gregory Pine

Pumpkin Foundation/ Joe Reich

Jim Rogers

Beverly and Bill Rosoff

Sage Foundation

Sybil Shainwald

Laraine and David Spector

Claire and Edward Stiepleman

Melanie and Ryan Uteg

Jia Zhao and Hongyi Chen

# SHOW ME THE WAY

## YOU SHOWED ME THE WAY

by Ella Fitzgerald, Chick Webb,  
Teddy McRae, and Bud Green

Arranged by Jonathan King

You showed me the way  
When I was someone in distress  
A heart in search of happiness  
You showed me the way

My sky was so grey  
I never knew I'd feel a thrill  
I couldn't dream a dream until  
You showed me the way

The moment you found me  
The shadows around me  
Just disappeared from view  
The world became rosy  
Each corner so cozy  
Darling, all because of you

You showed me the way  
And if I've learned that love can be  
A paradise for you and me  
Here's all I can say  
You showed me the way

## A SABLE JUBILEE

Text: Tesia Kwarteng

Music: Jasmine Barnes

### 1. INSPIRATION

Black joy is a tapestry woven by belly laughs  
Electric sliding through gradients of melanin  
The flavors of the earth  
Rich soil, tree bark, cacao, brown sugar  
Caramelized dreams  
Sweet potato pie  
Love passed down through generations  
Smiled though silent tears and weary years

Happiness down a soul train line  
Unc's white linen suit  
Homecoming  
"Who all gon' be there?"  
Cocoa butter scented hugs  
Tea spilled before I let you go  
The pleasure of perfectly round afro puffs  
Constellations of seasoned food gifted from  
the ancestors  
Shining stars no matter who we are

Hair that coils like two intertwined lovers  
Wrapped like kente across broad shoulders  
Crystal sweetness gleaming like gold name  
plates  
A shared understanding  
A secret language  
Head nods, daps, five on the black hand side

A lineage of strength  
A let's stay together kind of love  
Praise and Black pride  
Shouts of joy and thanks  
Standing on the promises  
Elated to be melanated

## **2. LUXURY**

We're proud of ourselves  
Why wouldn't we be?  
Trendsetters, history makers  
Creative always imitated  
Evidenced by the culture  
We set the tone  
Daring doers  
Mesmerizing magic  
Beautifully human

We are more than enough  
Why can't you see that?  
Too blessed  
Unstressed syllables and moods  
A way of being, living, moving, breathing  
Fists high, torches of solidarity  
This joy is radical  
Precious and must be protected  
Bold and blooming  
Watered and fueled by the divine  
This joy is luxury  
Theme and variations of onyx  
obsidian, ebony, raven, jet  
Black.

## **3. ELEVATION**

A sparkling legacy  
Unapologetically shining like Opal  
Our darkness is no illusion  
It was designed to illuminate endless  
originality  
Ingenuity  
Metallic freedom that never loses its luster  
Resonant warriors  
  
Rejoicing, vibrating  
A harbinger of hope  
Shades of chestnut  
An offering you shouldn't take for granted  
Spellbinding cinnamon  
Satellites orbiting our birthright  
And still creating our own

## **I GREW A ROSE**

**Text: Paul Laurence Dunbar**

**Music: Florence B. Price**

### **PROMISE**

I grew a rose within a garden fair,  
And, tending it with more than loving care,  
I thought how, with the glory of its bloom,  
I should the darkness of my life illumine;  
And, watching, ever smiled to see the  
lusty bud  
Drink freely in the summer sun to tinct  
its blood.

My rose began to open, and its hue  
Was sweet to me as to it sun and dew;  
I watched it taking on its ruddy flame  
Until the day of perfect blooming came,  
Then hasted I with smiles to find it blushing  
red—

Too late! Some thoughtless child had  
plucked my rose and fled!

### **FULFILLMENT**

I grew a rose once more to please mine eyes,  
All things to aid it, dew, sun, wind, fair skies  
Were kindly. And to shield it from despoil  
I fenced it in with grateful toil.

"No other hand than mine shall pluck this  
flower said I.

And I was jealous of the bee that  
hovered nigh.

It grew for days; I stood hour after hour  
To watch the slow unfolding of the flower.  
And then I did not leave its side at all!  
Lest some mischance my flower  
should befall.

At last, oh joy! the central petals burst apart.  
It blossomed—but, alas! a worm was at  
its heart!

## **A PRAYER**

**Text:** Sara Teasdale

**Music:** Rene Orth

Until I lose my soul and lie  
Blind to the beauty of the earth,  
Deaf though shouting wind goes by,  
Dumb in a storm of mirth;

Until my heart is quenched by length  
And I have left the land of men,  
Oh, let me love with all my strength  
Careless if I am loved again.

## **FOUR SONGS**

**Text:** Edna St. Vincent Millay

**Music:** Margaret Bonds

### **1. EVEN IN THE MOMENT**

Even in the moment of our earliest kiss,  
When sighed the straitened bud into flower,  
Sat the drey seed of most unwelcome this;  
And that I knew, though not the day  
and hour.

Too season-wise am I, being country-bred,  
To tilt at autumn or defy the frost:  
Snuffing the chill even as my fathers did,  
I say with them, "What's out tonight is lost."  
I only hoped with the mild hope of all  
Who watch the leaf take shape upon  
the tree,



A fairer summer and a later fall  
Than in these parts a man is apt to see,  
And sunny clusters ripened for the wine:  
I tell you this across the blackened vine.

## **2. FEAST**

I drank at every vine.  
The last was like the first.  
I came upon no wine  
So wonderful as thirst.  
I gnawed at every root.  
I ate of every plant.  
I came upon no fruit  
So wonderful as want.  
Feed the grape and bean  
To the vintner and monger;  
I will lie down lean  
With my thirst and my hunger.

## **3. I KNOW MY MIND**

I know my mind and I have made my choice;  
Not from your temper does my doom  
depend;  
Love me or love me not, you have no voice  
In this, that is my portion to the end.  
Your presence and your favours, the full part  
That you could give, you now can take away:  
What lies between your beauty and my heart  
Not even you can trouble or betray.  
Mistake me not—unto my inmost core  
I do desire your kiss upon my mouth;

They have not craved a cup of water more  
That bleach upon the deserts of the south;  
Here might you bless me; what you  
cannot do  
Is bow me down, that have been loved  
by you.

## **4. WHAT LIPS MY LIPS HAVE KISSED**

What lips my lips have kissed, and where,  
and why,  
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
Under my head till morning; but the rain  
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
Upon the glass and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain  
For unremembered lads that not again  
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.

Thus in the winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one  
by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.

**AH, LOVE IS A JASMINE  
VINE, FROM CABILDO,  
OP. 149**

**Libretto: Nan Bagby Stephens**

**Music: Amy Cheney Beach**

VALERIE

Ah, Love is a jasmine vine  
With tendrils delicate and strong.  
Caressing arms that long to twine,  
To twine and wreath themselves  
around you.

My dear, my dearest one,  
Ah, my dear, my dearest one,  
My dear, my dearest one!

PIERRE

Ah, Love is a fragrance rare

VALERIE

A murmur borne on summer wind.

PIERRE

Entreating, unresigned to bear  
A tear to shine upon you!

VALERIE

My dear, my dearest one!

PERRE

Ah!

VALERIE

My dear, my dearest one!

DUO

My dear, my dearest one!

Oh Love is a tender voice with song  
So penetrating sweet  
It wings to meet and to rejoice,  
Rejoice and breathe its blessing on you.  
My dear, my dearest one!  
Ah! My dearest, dearest one!  
My dearest one!

VALERIE

Ah—

PERRE

My Love, let me come to thee!

VALERIE

I come to open the door for thee.  
The guard is even now gone from the  
courtyard.  
Open the door, Pierre Lafitte!

## SPELL TO TURN THE WORLD AROUND

**Text:** Kathryn Smith

**Music:** Kamala Sankaram

Begin each day collecting birds battered  
in the night by creatures bent on malice.  
Give thanks for dew and viscera's  
bright litter,  
leaves brought down by drought and  
feathers damp  
with blood. When you say you love fall,  
be sure  
you know it's death's season. Take shallow  
breaths, reminding you of summer's smoke,  
a wildfire bruise that locked us all inside.  
Cling to warm October afternoons  
as vow to live a waterless winter.  
Drive cross-state to the firefighter's grave  
and read the poem he memorized at 17,  
three years before flames overtook  
the vehicle  
he rode in, trying to reach disaster.

## SONGS TO THE DARK VIRGIN

**Text:** Langston Hughes

**Music:** Florence B. Price

- I.  
Would  
That I were a jewel,  
A shattered jewel,  
That all my shining brilliants  
Might fall at thy feet,  
Thou dark one.
- II.  
Would  
That I were a garment,  
A shimmering, silken garment,  
That all my folds  
Might wrap about thy body,  
Absorb thy body,  
Hold and hide thy body,  
Thou dark one.
- III.  
Would  
That I were a flame,  
But one sharp, leaping flame  
To annihilate thy body,  
Thou dark one.

## MACHINE HEAD: TED BURKE POEMS

**Text:** Ted Burke

**Music:** Libby Larsen

*(Some words in the songs are slightly different.  
Text that is omitted entirely is in brackets.)*

### I. REXALL

A man in the front seat of a car  
parked in front of  
a Rexall drugs  
runs his thumb  
under his suspenders  
and lets the elastic snap  
against his pinstripe shirt.

His son cries  
that last gasps  
of a crying jag  
that is only for show,  
the boy's attempt  
to keep alive  
the mania and  
rage  
that made him seem  
powerful in a world  
where he only came up  
to other people's waist lines.

The father lights  
an Old Gold,  
turns up the car radio,  
smiling as he soundlessly  
mouths the words  
Patti Page is singing,

dancing in Tennessee  
has never seemed so distant  
[and strange  
an idea to him,]  
and then he cracks the window,  
thinking of his wife  
who he imagines going up and down  
the aisles  
reading the labels of every cold medicine  
she sees,

He thinks, man this is a great tasting  
cigarette,

"All I want is a comic book" says  
the son, ...

The boy snuffles, Dad  
crushes the cigarette in the ash tray,  
looking off into the distance and  
noticing the color of leaves in the trees,  
knowing the days  
seem to get shorter  
as his work hours get longer,

He reaches over and messes his son's hair,  
"Not every drug store sells comic books"  
he says dreamily,

"not everything is funny or for fun.

Sometimes you just have to wait."

### II. MY FATHER INTERCEPTS MY TRIP TO ANOTHER PLANET

Deep in the spaces of the garage behind  
all the bedsprings  
and stacks of Life Magazines is the fort I

made with the cardboard  
crate our refrigerator came in.

Nothing but people's ankles can be seen  
through the  
hole I cut and carved out in the side of the  
box with a dull  
pocket knife, every man was in high pants,  
pleats up to the waist,  
every woman wore plaid skirts, carrying  
drinks, school books,  
other kinds of mysteries.

I closed my eyes and there were the  
controls to this  
ever evolving ship, race car, airplane, fast  
train, jet, rocket to the  
stars, back in time for Flintstones, before  
twilight became  
darkness and the shade of trees became a  
black that wrapped  
existence with the whispers of dead things  
rustling through the  
homes of their birth, looking for something  
that is not in their  
hands, contained in their shroud.

I open my eyes again and find myself  
floating up the  
stairs to my room, in my father's arms, who  
tells me those  
adventures in space are tiring for  
cosmonauts and astronauts  
and Argonauts, no matter he says,

My older brother has his head in his palm  
while he

watches TV, Mom is running water in the  
[kitchen] sink,

Dad lays me on the bed and pulls up the  
covers, he sings to  
me about why he loves Paris, in the  
Springtime, when it's raining.

From *no one home*, pg 15. Old House Press,  
San Diego, CA, © 2003

### III. MACHINE HEAD

The hippest machines  
of our day  
does not think  
about dealing  
with the likes of us  
once someone invents  
batteries that  
never run down,

free from plugs  
and the walls of  
homes that keep them  
predictable and safe  
for the family to view,  
the hippest machines of the day  
will never define time  
as something  
you had to do "something" with,  
something you had to  
"kill"  
or "spend"  
or  
"while away"  
until the affliction of waiting is done with  
and time is

"filled" again[, as if it were  
a can or a box hungry for  
stuff that machines manufacture  
or make obsolete.]

Machines of gratuitous good looks  
just sit wherever they  
happen to be  
and look pretty as they  
purr, utility and logic of design  
disguised by gleam  
that addresses  
a flesh and blood need  
for a pretty face  
that means nothing  
and stands for less.

All my machines are plugged in, of course,  
and they reek of English Leather,  
or they contemplate major leaps  
in technology,  
invention before need arises,  
genius in  
bathroom stalls,  
machine that go on and on  
and do everything  
under the sun  
that never seemed to break down before  
until someone built a machine,  
a goddamned  
machine.

The hippest machines  
on my block  
solicit my opinions  
for no-good-reason-to-know

because of a yearning  
in their programming  
to have some  
bytes removed and munched on,  
chewed over, mulled and gnawed  
like a doubt ...

All the bad wiring in the world circles  
around my heart  
when I realize you're still not here, that I'm  
talking to  
answering machines that tell me everything  
except where you are and why we aren't  
in love  
like we used to be.

My machines know all my sounds,  
the rhythm of bad habits  
they are powerless to match.

*From sitting in the dark*, pg. 17. Old House Press,  
San Diego, CA, © 2002

## EVERYTHING THAT EVER WAS

**Text:** Tracy K. Smith

**Music:** Sarah Kirkland Snider

Like a wide wake, rippling  
Infinitely into the distance, everything

That ever was still is, somewhere,  
Floating near the surface, nursing  
Its hunger for you and me

And the now we've named  
And made a place of.

Like groundswell sometimes  
It surges up, claiming a little piece  
Of where we stand.

Like the wind the rains ride in on,  
It sweeps across the leaves,

Pushing in past the windows  
We didn't slam quickly enough.  
Dark water it will take days to drain.

It surprised us last night in my sleep.  
Brought food, a gift. Stood squarely

There between us, while your eyes  
Danced toward mine, and my hands  
Sat working a thread in my lap.

Up close, it was so thin. And when finally  
You reached for me, it backed away,

Bereft, but not vanquished, Today,  
Whatever it was seems slight, a trail  
Of cloud rising up like smoke.

And the trees that watch as I write  
Sway in the breeze, as if all that stirs

Under the soil is a little tickle of knowledge  
The great blind roots will tease through  
And push eventually past.

From *Life on Mars*. Copyright © 2011 by Tracy K.  
Smith. Reprinted with the permission of Graywolf  
Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota,  
[www.graywolfpress.org](http://www.graywolfpress.org).

## IF I CAN HELP SOMEBODY

By Alma Bazel Androzzo

Arranged by Terry and Will Liverman

If I can help somebody, as I travel along  
If I can help somebody, in a word or  
a song

If I can help somebody, from doing wrong  
Then my living shall not be in vain  
Oh, my living shall not be in vain  
Then my living shall not be in vain

If I can help somebody, while I'm singing  
this song

Then my living shall not be in vain  
If I can help somebody, as I travel along  
Then my living shall not be in vain

Original text © 1947 Boosey & Hawkes Ltd.,  
London 1945  
Reprinted as adapted

