



COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

# BAILEY SCHOOL of MUSIC

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

Sept. 19, 2021 | 3 p.m.

Recital Hall,  
Room 109 (Music Building)

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



Dr. Bobbie Bailey

# School of Music

**Welcome to the Bailey School of Music  
at Kennesaw State University!**

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 (MHHE) at Kennesaw State University is a public entity, exhibiting educational resources funded by World War II and the Holocaust. It is effective in providing dialogue about the past to the community.

The educational dialogue at World War II and the Holocaust, through our programs has:

- Multicultural human experiences
- Historical and social perspectives
- Research and development of life
- Acceptance of civic and social responsibilities

Established in 2003, the MHHE is a part of the University of Kennesaw State. The Department of Museums, Archives, and Rare Books (MARB), under the leadership of Dr. Catherine Leitch, Assistant Vice President of Professional History at Kennesaw State University.

Meet History **FACE** to **FACE**  
[historymuseum.kennesaw.edu](http://historymuseum.kennesaw.edu)





# Program

Introduction  
Adina Langer

Commentary  
Sheena Ramirez

**LORI LAITMAN (b. 1955)**

*I Never Saw Another Butterfly*

IV. The Garden

V. Man Proposes, God Disposes

VI. The Old House

Sheena Ramirez, soprano  
Jeanette Zyko, English horn

**LORI LAITMAN**

*The Secret Exit*

II. When in Early Summer

Sheena Ramirez, soprano  
Jeanette Zyko, English horn

Commentary  
Sheena Ramirez

**LORI LAITMAN**

*The Ocean of Eternity*

I. The Ocean of Eternity

II. Futureless

III. The Morning was Blue

IV. Wild Flowers

Sheena Ramirez, soprano  
Jeanette Zyko, oboe  
Jeremiah Padilla, piano

INTERMISSION

Commentary  
Laurence Sherr

**LAURENCE SHERR (b. 1953), arr.**

*Yid, du partizaner*

Sheena Ramirez, soprano

Jeremiah Padilla, piano

**LAURENCE SHERR**

*In the Free Forests*, premiere

Jeanette Zyko, oboe

Jeremiah Padilla, piano

Commentary  
Sheena Ramirez

**LORI LAITMAN**

*In Sleep the World is Yours*

I. Lullaby

II. Yes

III. Tragedy

Sheena Ramirez, soprano  
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)

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

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.

## [Program Notes, continued]

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).

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

## [Program Notes, continued]

*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





# 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)

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)

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.

[Poems and Translations, continued]

## Selma Meerbaum-Eisinger (1924 - 1942)

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

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, described as a “light, perky soprano” (*New York Times*), has been handling classical audience over country and Tw 0 -1.(T)12 (

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.





## 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.artifaction.com](http://www.artifaction.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](http://artsongs.com).

# Memorandum

## in the Department of Music

The Department of Music at Indiana State University provides the opportunity for students to perform in the Kessler Concert Hall. Each performance is staffed with business managers, or the non-musical staff, who handle the business side of the performance, including ticket sales, advertising, and the non-musical aspects of the performance.

Your contribution of \$100.00 to the Department of Music will help sustain the excellent performance opportunities at KSU.

WHS



# arts KSU

470-578-6151 • [arts.kennesaw.edu/music](http://arts.kennesaw.edu/music)

## College of the Arts

Prof. Harrison Long (Interim Dean & Professor, Theatre)

Dr. Peter Fielding (Associate Dean)

Dr. Leslie J. Blackwell (Interim Associate Dean)

Prof. Geo Sipp (Director, School of Art & Design)

Prof. Marsha Barsky (Chair, Department of Dance)

Dr. Jesús Castro-Balbi (Director, Bailey School of Music)

Prof. Chuck Meacham (Chair, Department of Theatre & Performance Studies)