

# *Song Composition Project*

presented by the NEC Composition Department and Song Lab

## *Nine Premieres*

Wednesday, April 23, 2025

6:30 p.m.

Williams Hall

PROGRAM

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**Grace Hughes**

*Music When Soft Voices Die*

Sydney Pexton, soprano  
Rafe Lei Schaberg, piano

**Tomer Rozen**

*Falling Up*

Rena Maduro, soprano  
Tristan Leung, piano

**Mathew Lanning**

*The Sea and You* (2025)

Isabel Merat, soprano  
Yoshino Toi, piano

**Ying Gao**

*All the Letters I Can Write (With a Flower)*

Mirah Johnston, mezzo-soprano  
Yoshino Toi, piano

**Tian Jiang**

*Rain on the Broken Bridge*

Qianqian Li, soprano  
Sandy Li, piano

**Jackson Yang**

*Winter Dusk*

Isis Bermúdez Rivera, soprano  
Tristan Leung, piano

**Cecily Rea**

*O Me! O Life!*

Chris Li, soprano  
Anna Park, piano

**Trygve Lebakken**

*5 + 1 Verses*

Shanti Fowler-Puja, soprano  
Rafe Lei Schaberg, piano

**Kiara Kong**

*Invictus*

Ricky Owens, countertenor  
Sandy Li, piano

### **Music when Soft Voices Die**

Music, when soft voices die,  
Vibrates in the memory—  
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,  
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,  
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;  
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,  
Love itself shall slumber on.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley*

### **Falling Up**

I tripped on my shoelace  
And I fell up-  
Up to the roof tops,  
Up over the town,  
Up past the tree tops,  
Up over the mountains,  
Up where the colors  
Blend into the sounds.  
But it got me so dizzy  
When I looked around,  
I got sick to my stomach  
And I threw down.

*Shel Silverstein*

### **The Sea and You**

The stroke of the sea upon my door  
is blue sensation between my toes,  
and your impetuous leap through my spirit  
is no less blue, an eternal birth.

All the color of awakened aurora  
the sea and you swim to my encounter,  
and in the madness of loving me  
    until the shipwreck  
you both go breaking the ports and the oars.

If I just had a ship of seagulls,  
and could for an instant stop them,  
and shout my voice that they fight

in a simple duel of mystery!

That one in the other might find  
his own voice,  
interweave their dreams in the wind,  
bind stars in their eyes  
so that they give, united, their beams.

May there be a duel of music in the air  
the opened magnolias of their kisses,  
that the waves dress in passions  
and the passion dress in sailboats.

All the color of awakened aurora  
may the sea and you expand it into a dream  
that it carry my ship of seagulls  
and leave me in the water of two skies.

*Text by Julia de Burgos, translated by Jack Augers*

### **All the Letters I Can Write (With a Flower)**

All the letters I can write  
Are not fair as this —  
Syllables of Velvet —  
Sentences of Plush,  
Depths of Ruby, undrained,  
Hid, Lip, for Thee —  
Play it were a Humming Bird  
And just sipped — me —

*Emily Dickinson*

### **Rain on the Broken Bridge**

Upon the bridge where pale mists weep,  
Two hearts in secret vigil keep.  
Though chains may bind, though fate may chide,  
Love lingers long and will not hide.  
Silken sleeves in sorrow sway,  
A ghostly hand through time's decay.  
The drum resounds, the harpstrings sigh —  
A grief that neither wanes nor dies.

*(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)*

断桥雨落·世俗樊笼。

(Rain drizzles on the broken bridge, trapped within the worldly cares).

Soft sonnets traced in tear-stained ink,  
Where distant voices meet and sink.  
Behind the painted mask of woe,  
What trembles deep but dares not show?  
Yet love, unmasked, burns ever bright,  
A silver flame in endless night.  
A crescent hush hums love's lament,  
While trembling strings weave prayers unspent.  
Their voices merge, both old and new,  
A song that neither fades nor folds.  
Through sorrow's cry, through boundless breath,  
Love dances past the gates of death.

诉尽人间几多愁·情殇千古共悲流。

(I speak of all the sorrow life can hold, love's mournful end, a grief that ever flows).

*Shili Wang, translation provided by Qianqian Li*

### Winter Dusk

I watch the great clear twilight  
Veiling the ice-bowed trees;  
Their branches tinkle faintly  
With crystal melodies.  
The larches bend their silver  
Over the hush of snow;  
One star is lighted in the west,  
Two in the zenith glow.  
For a moment I have forgotten  
Wars and women who mourn,  
I think of the mother who bore me  
And thank her that I was born.

*Sara Teasdale*

### O Me! O Life!

Oh me! Oh life! of the questions of these recurring,  
Of the endless trains of the faithless, of cities fill'd with the foolish,  
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)  
Of eyes that vainly crave the light, of the objects mean, of the struggle ever renew'd,  
Of the poor results of all, of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me,  
Of the empty and useless years of the rest, with the rest me intertwined,  
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer.

That you are here—that life exists and identity,  
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse.

*Walt Whitman*

**5 + 1 Verses**

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*E. E. Cummings*

**Invictus**

Out of the night that covers me,  
  Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
  For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
  I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
  My head is bloody, but unbowed.

*(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)*

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

*William Ernest Henley*

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