

NEC Conductors' Choir

Students of Erica J. Washburn

conductors

Bailee Green '25 MM

Lena Ying-Ting Wong '25 MM

Henri Youmans '25 MM

Honghao Howard Zheng '25 MM

with

Grace Lee, piano

Monday, April 28, 2025

8:00 p.m.

Burnes Hall

PROGRAM

Kai-Young Chan
(b. 1989)

Egrets Around the Mountain 浣溪沙 · 漁父
(2019/2024)

Lena Ying-Ting Wong '25 MM, conductor

Thomas Crequillon
(1505–1557)

Toutes les nuictz

Henri Youmans '25 MM, conductor

Morten Lauridsen
(b. 1943)

De ton rêve, trop plein (2004)

Bailee Green '25 MM, conductor

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Im Herbst from *Fünf Gesänge*, op. 104 no. 5

Honghao Howard Zheng '25 MM, conductor

Claudio Monteverdi
(1567–1643)

Quel augellin, che canta
from *Il settimo libro de madrigali*, 1619

Bailee Green, conductor

William Byrd
(ca. 1540–1623)

Sing Joyfully

Lena Ying-Ting Wong, conductor


Dale Trumbore
(b. 1987)

Returning

Henri Youmans, conductor

REFRAIN:

Audience



They will re - turn to you, they will re - turn to you, they will re - turn.

Trumbore has requested that the audience join the short refrain, printed above, which will occur several times throughout the piece. Please join in singing when the conductor invites you to do so.

Program notes

Chan *Egrets Around the Mountain*

Su Tung-Po's "Egrets around the Mountain" (浣溪沙·漁父) paints a calm and poetic portrait of life in nature. The poem opens with graceful imagery: white egrets flying beside the Saicoi Mountain, and a lone fishing boat gliding beyond Saanfaa Island. In the heart of the serene riverscape, peach petals float along streams where mandarin fish swim. The speaker, likely a fisherman or hermit, wanders with his blue bamboo hat and green straw cloak, symbols of a simple, independent life in harmony with nature. The final line – "The howling wind and drizzle shall not send me home," expresses a spirit of deep comfort and contentment, embracing the natural world. Su balances nature with philosophy, offering a vision of peace even in uncertainty.

The setting of the piece for SATB choir is one of the ten recorded works on Hong Kong composer Chan Kai-Young's 2025 album, *Constraints/Creativity: A Collection of Cantonese Choral Works by Chan Kai-Young*. Chan adopts a "text-first, music-second" compositional approach, and uses tonal and rhythmic constraints of Cantonese as a creative foundation. Drawing inspiration from diverse texts — Song dynasty poetry, modern verse, biblical texts, and original lyrics — he sets them to music in a vibrant style shaped by Cantonese language. Chan also leads a Youtube series, *Writing Cantonese Music*, where he discusses unique challenges of composing Cantonese choral music, and shares approaches to developing a contemporary Cantonese choral voice.

– Lena Ying-Ting Wong

西塞山邊白鷺飛·
散花洲外片帆微·
桃花流水鱖魚肥·
自底一身青箬笠·
相隨到處綠蓑衣·
斜風細雨不須歸。

Su Tung-Po

As egrets fly around the Saicoi Mountain,
The fishing boats sail about the Saanfaa
Island.
Full-grown mandarin fish swim in streams
with peach petals.
Bringing with me my blue bamboo hat,
I travel around in my green straw cloak.
The howling wind and drizzle shall not send
me home.

Translation by Chan Kai-Young

Crequillon *Toutes les nuictz*

Thomas Crequillon was a Franco-Flemish composer of the Renaissance period. Mainly known for his sacred music, Crequillon worked in the chapel under Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. With his imitative polyphony composition style, Crequillon wrote a variety of masses, motets, and chansons. While he was widely known during his time, Crequillon has since become less known due to the popularity of some of his contemporaries at the time, such as Josquin des Prez.

In his piece *Toutes les nuictz*, Crequillon uses a variety of text painting, such as a prolonged “en souspirant” illustrating a sighing motion. If you are a modern French speaker, you may notice that some of the text is spelled differently than what you are used to in today’s vernacular. Since this piece was written during the 1500s, it was composed in Middle French, which used slightly different spellings, one such example being in the title “nuictz” instead of “nuits”. — Henri Youmans

Toutes les nuictz
Que sans vous je me couche
Pensant à vous, ne fais que sommeiller
Et en resvant jusques au resveillier
Incessamment, vous quiers par my la couche
Et bien souvent en lieu de vostre bouche
En souspirant je baise l'oreillier

Anonymous

Every night
I lie down without you,
Thinking of you just makes me drowsy,
And dreaming till I wake
I continually seek you in the bed
And often instead of your lips,
Sighing I kiss the pillow.

Translation from French (Français) to
English copyright © 2012 by David Wyatt,
reprinted with permission from the LiederNet
Archive, <https://www.lieder.net/>

Lauridsen *De ton rêve, trop plein*

In *De ton rêve, trop plein*, Morten Lauridsen offers a striking contrast to the serene lyricism found in his more widely known works. Composed in 2004 for The Real Group, this brief yet potent setting of a Rilke text delves into the elusive and often turbulent nature of dreams.

Lauridsen employs dramatic shifts in tempo and mood throughout the piece,

using these abrupt contrasts to mirror the emotional instability of dream states. The harmonic language, while unmistakably his, leans into sharper dissonances. These tensions are largely the result of inverting clusters of voice parts around a fixed pitch, creating complex harmonic mirrorings that shimmer and unsettle in equal measure. Though only a few minutes in duration, *De ton rêve, trop plein* showcases Lauridsen's command of choral color and form. It is a compact study in contrasts—at once intimate and intense, grounded and ephemeral—revealing a more angular facet of the composer's distinctive voice.

— Bailee Green

*De ton rêve trop plein,
fleur en dedans nombreuse,
mouillée comme une pleureuse,
tu te penches sur le matin.
Tes douces forces qui dorment,
dans un désir incertain,
développent ces tendres formes
entre joues et seins.*

Of your dream too full,
flower [that is] numerous within,
wet as a mourner[’s face],
you bow yourself to the morning.
Your gentle strength which sleeps
in tremulous longing,
expands these tender shapes
between cheeks and breasts.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Translation by Debi Simons, *Behind the Music*

Brahms *Im Herbst*

Johannes Brahms' *Im Herbst* (In Autumn), op. 104 no. 5, is the final song in his choral collection *Fünf Gesänge* (Five Songs) for SATB choir, published in 1888. Brahms composed this melancholy piece in 1886, setting a poem by his friend Klaus Groth. As the closing work of the set, *Im Herbst* conveys strong themes of nostalgia and sadness. Being over 50 years old at the time, Brahms found personal meaning in the poem's imagery of fading nature and the autumn of life.

Groth's poem "Ernst ist der Herbst" uses autumn as a symbol of death: fallen leaves, silent fields, and birds migrating south create a lonely mood, suggesting endings and loss. Days shorten as sunlight fades into fog, leaving the world in silence. The final stanza describes a person watching the sunset, sensing their life is near its end. Yet, the line "tears reveal the heart's happiest feeling" hints at finding peace even in darkness.

Brahms' music reflects the poem's emotional journey. Written for a four-part choir, the first two verses repeat the same melody in c minor, with expressive harmonies deepening the sadness. In the third verse, the key shifts to C major, introducing a calm and hopeful tone. This musical change mirrors the poem's progression from despair to quiet acceptance.

— Honghao Howard Zheng

Im Herbst

Ernst ist der Herbst,
und wenn die Blätter fallen,
sinkt auch das Herz
zu trübem Weh herab.
Still ist die Flur,
und nach dem Süden wallen
die Sanger, stumm,
wie nach dem Grab.

Bleich ist der Tag,
und blasse Nebel schleiern
die Sonne wie die Herzen ein.
Fruh kommt die Nacht:
Denn alle Krafte feiern,
und tief verschlossen ruht das Sein.

Sanft wird der Mensch,
er sieht die Sonne sinken,
er ahnt des Lebens wie des Jahres Schluss.
Feucht wird das Aug,
doch in der Trane blinken
entstromt des Herzens seligster Erguss.

Klaus Groth

In Autumn

Somber is the autumn,
and when the leaves fall,
so does the heart sink
into dreary woe.
Silent is the meadow
and to the south have flown
silently all the songbirds,
as if to the grave.

Pale is the day,
and wan clouds veil
the sun as they veil the heart.
Night comes early:
for all work comes to a halt
and existence itself rests in profound secrecy.

Man becomes kindly.
He sees the sun sinking,
he realizes that life is like the end of a year.
His eye grows moist,
yet in the midst of his tears shines
streaming from the heart a blissful effusion.

Translation copyright © by Emily Ezust, from the
LiederNet Archive -- <https://www.lieder.net/>

Monteverdi *Quel augellin, che canta*

Claudio Monteverdi's *Quel augellin che canta* exemplifies the composer's mature madrigal style as it evolved in the early seventeenth century. Published in his *Seventh Book of Madrigals* (1619), this piece belongs to a period in which Monteverdi was exploring the *seconda pratica*, a revolutionary approach that prioritized textual expression and dramatic affect over strict contrapuntal rules.

Set for five voices, *Quel augellin che canta* is a miniature pastoral scene that contrasts the carefree singing of a bird with the emotional suffering of a love-struck poet. Monteverdi uses expressive dissonance, sensitive word painting, and subtle shifts in texture to depict the opposing states of nature's innocence and human despair. The bird's song is portrayed through bright, ornamented melodic lines, while the poet's lament is marked by chromaticism and suspensions that evoke tension and longing. The affective contrast highlights Monteverdi's deep sensitivity to the rhetorical power of music as a means to elevate poetic meaning.

This madrigal also reflects Monteverdi's increasing interest in monodic and concertato styles, bridging the polyphonic tradition of the Renaissance with the dramatic immediacy of the early Baroque. It is a work that encapsulates the aesthetic ideals of a composer who stood at the crux of two musical eras, marrying technical

*Quell'augellin, che canta
sì dolcemente, e lascivetto vola
or da l'abete al faggio
ed or dal faggio al mirto,
s'avesse umano spirito,
direbbe: "Ardo d'amore, ardo d'amore".
Ma ben arde nel core
e chiama il suo desio
che gli risponde: "Ardo d'amore anch'io".
Che sii tu benedetto,
Amoroso gentil vago augelletto.*

Giovanni Battista Guarini

This little bird which sings
so sweetly, and wantonly flies
now from the fir tree to the beech
and now from the beech to the myrtle,
had it a human soul
it would say "I burn with love".
Certainly it burns in its heart
and it calls its love
who replies, "I, too, burn with love".
May you be blessed,
loving, tender, pretty, little bird.

Translation from The Full Monteverdi,
WordPress.com

Byrd *Sing Joyfully*

William Byrd was one of the most admired and influential composers during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, and was known to be a practicing Roman Catholic. Despite being a Catholic in Protestant England, however, he wrote extensively for both Latin and English texts. Byrd's music is known for its expressive clarity and masterful use of polyphony.

Sing Joyfully, written for six voices (SSAATB), is one of Byrd's most widely performed English anthems. It sets verses from Psalm 81 to music with spirited polyphonic texture and textural clarity. The piece begins with a call to worship – "Sing joyfully unto God our strength" – and unfolds in a vibrant counterpoint, with each voice imitating and enhancing the next. Byrd uses vivid word painting to depict instruments like trumpets, timbrels, and harps. It is a celebratory and a finely crafted piece, reflecting and showcasing the spirit of polyphonic music.

– Lena Ying-Ting Wong

Sing joyfully to God our strength; sing loud unto the God of Jacob!
Take the song, bring forth the timbrel, the pleasant harp, and the viol.
Blow the trumpet in the new moon, even in the time appointed, and at our feast day.
For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

Psalm 81:1-4

Trumbore *Returning*

Dale Trumbore is a present-day composer mainly known for her choral and vocal compositions. Her most notable work would be her secular requiem *How to Go On*. For *Returning*, she writes:

"Laura Foley's poem *Returning* describes the return of wild geese each year. Just as the birds of the poem return again, several elements within the piece return: the chorus, joined by the audience, sings a simple recurring refrain. The melody of the refrain concludes on an A, the starting note of the piece, and as the birds

return home at the end of the piece, the final note of *Returning* comes to rest on the same A as well."

Returning

I have learned this:
if you stay in one place long enough
they will return to you.

The geese you saw leaving,
their feet rising into dark bodies.
They will return.

All you need to do is
watch the sun each day
as it tumbles through the sky
and they will come again.

They will return,
floating toward you,
their damp bodies
still trembling from flight.

Laura Foley

NEC Conductors' Choir

Coco Chapman
Bailee Green
Johan Hartman
Taitem Johnson
Grace Lee
Robert Moorman
Yuanwei Ni
Erica J. Washburn
Lena Ying-Ting Wong
Henri Youmans
Zibo Yuan
Honghao Howard Zheng

Grace Lee, piano

Bailee Green, a second-year graduate student from Mississippi, is obtaining a Master of Music degree in choral conducting from the New England Conservatory of Music in the studio of Erica Washburn.

In addition to their current degree, Bailee is also an avid teaching assistant with the Boston Children's Chorus. Their teaching philosophy is built upon the belief that all children deserve the right to discover and unlock the music within. Bailee's previous experiences with teaching include both middle school and high school show choir groups.

Bailee received their Bachelor of Music Education degree from the University of Southern Mississippi where they studied under Dr. Gregory Fuller and Dr. Jonathan Kilgore. During their time there, Bailee fostered a love for the Estonian choral tradition and choral conducting, all while striving to amplify the voices of under-represented groups in the music education field through their thesis, "Transgender and Nonbinary Attitudes Toward the Choral Music Education Experience."

Now as a conductor, Bailee hopes to increase awareness and appreciation of LGBTQ+, BIPOC, and women composers by programming their music.

Lena Ying-Ting Wong is currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the New England Conservatory under the guidance of Erica Washburn. Lena holds a Master of Arts degree in Music from the Chinese University of Hong Kong and a Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in Music from Hong Kong Baptist University, where she majored in voice.

An experienced chorister, Lena has performed with various leading ensembles, including Die Konzertisten, Handel and Haydn Society, Opera Hong Kong Chorus, Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus. She is also a member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, where she collaborates with different world's finest musicians.

Now based in Boston, Lena continues to explore the intersection of choral and orchestral music, aspiring to bring diverse musical traditions to life on the international stage.

Henri Youmans is a conductor and tenor who hails from Camillus, New York and is a recent graduate of Syracuse University with a bachelor's degree in music education with voice concentration. During his time at Syracuse, he was an active member of the auditioned Syracuse University singers and the SU pride of the orange marching band for four years. An alumnus of Phi Mu Alpha, Henri had also participated in a masterclass with Jenny Wong, as well as a teaching masterclass at a NY-ACDA conference. After graduating, Henri participated in the CNY Playhouse's production of *Heathers* the musical as an ensemble member and orchestra member. He is also an active tenor ringer for local churches around Boston, as well as the NEC Preparatory School Youth Chorale. Currently, he is a second-year master's student at NEC in the conducting studio of Erica Washburn and hopes to teach in public schools in the future to give students a safe space, a place to learn about the world around them, and to learn about themselves.

Honghao Howard Zheng is a conductor and baritone from China. He obtained his bachelor's degree in choral conducting from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in China. Currently, he is pursuing a master's degree in choral conducting at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston under the guidance of Professor Erica J. Washburn.

Honghao Zheng, as a member of the choir, earned exceptional success by obtaining first place gold medals in the Faith group at both the 8th Riga World Choir Competition in Latvia (2014) and the 9th Sochi World Choir Competition in Russia (2016). In addition, he achieved a first-place gold medal in the Mixed Voice, Male Voice, and Contemporary group categories at the 10th Tshwane World Choir Competition in South Africa (2018), while also attaining a notable second-place position. His skills as a choral conductor were acknowledged at the 66th Cork International Choral Festival in Ireland (2021), where he achieved first place in the Cappella Mixed Voice and Cappella Male Voice categories. Additionally, he secured first place in the Children's Voice category at the 2021 Prague Orbis Music Festival in the Czech Republic.

Honghao Zheng, as an opera conductor, has received widespread acclaim from audiences for his performances of the opera comique *Rita* (G. Donizetti) and *Pomme d'api* (Jacques Offenbach) at the Guangzhou Grand Theatre in China.

You are invited to a **COMMUNITY SING** of

Brahms
Ein deutsches Requiem, op. 45

Isis Bermúdez Ramirez, soprano
Qinglin Liu, baritone
with chamber orchestra and conductors
Bailee Green, Lena Ying-Ting Wong,
Henri Youmans, and Honghao Howard Zheng

Thursday, May 1, 12:15-1:45 pm, Brown Hall

*All are welcome – scores available at the door.
Please scan the code below to indicate your interest*



Support the future of music at NEC!

Your gift to The NEC Fund has a direct and immediate impact on student scholarships, NEC's world-class faculty, and a collaborative and innovative learning environment rooted in the highest level of musical excellence.

Please consider making a gift to support NEC at necmusic.edu/givenow

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

Stay connected 

N | E | C
New England
Conservatory
necmusic.edu/tonight