

**HOUGHTON
COLLEGE**

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Music By Two

Sharon Johnson & Nancy Davis,
pianists

in

Faculty and Guest Artist Recital
featuring

Eric Willie, percussion

Recital Hall
Center for the Arts
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
7:30 p.m.

Program

St. Matthew Passion: Suite for Two Pianos **J.S. Bach/arr. Greg Anderson**
Aria: Erbarme dich (1685-1750)
Chorale: Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese Strafe!
Aria: Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben
Chorale: O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden
Aria: Mache dich, mein Herze, rein

~~Brief Pause~~

THIS IS THE WORLD we know, the world of air **David Maslanka**
and breathing and sun and beating hearts (1943-2017)
(Two Pianos & Percussion)

- I. Nighthawks (after the painting by Edward Hopper)
- II. Do You Know My Name?
- III. Out of the Blue
- IV. The Closer You Get the Stranger the Stars Look
- V. Let It Be

Eric Willie, percussion

About the Performers

As *Music By Two*, pianists *Nancy Davis & Sharon Johnson*, were named finalists in the 2016 Professional Chamber Ensemble division of *The American Prize* Competition. They have been heard in a variety of venues including: WFMT Radio in Chicago, and have appeared in faculty and guest artist recitals at The Library of Congress, The University of Maryland, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Houghton College (New York), *First Friday Series* (Ohio), and *Music on Market* series (Ohio). Their repertoire includes compositions that range in style from romantic to 21st century to sacred. Both as a team, and as individuals, Davis and Johnson are actively involved in premieres of new works on a regular basis. Since the spring of 2005, *Music By Two* has given multiple premieres of Eric Ewazen's *Sonata for Two Pianos*. In January of 2007, the duo premiered an unpublished work by Lowell Liebermann, *Three Lullabies, Op. 76* in North Carolina. In March 2007, a re-discovered four-hand piano work by Louise Talma was premiered in a concert at The Library of Congress, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the MacDowell Colony. The two-piano version of the Talma work was premiered in January in North Carolina, and later, at the University of Maryland. *Music By Two* will release soon their first CD, *American Landscapes*, which includes world premieres of works by Eric Ewazen and Lowell Liebermann.

Averaging 50 concerts per year, *Davis*, has performed in the North Carolina area with University of North Carolina at Greensboro faculty including Randy Kohlenberg, Dennis Askew, Deborah Egekvist, Donald Hartmann, and LaVonne Tobin-Scott; and in New York recitals with Phyllis Tektonidis and Edward Bach, with whom she released a CD entitled, *Contrast*. A new CD project featuring Bach and Davis in sacred arrangements for trumpet and piano (*Glory to the Lord, My Shepherd*) was released in fall 2010. In 2016, she began an annual recital appearance with Bach at Brandon University (Manitoba); last year, she added performances and recordings with Aaron Wilson, trombone. After coaching with the composer, Davis and Renee Sokol, soprano, presented the world premiere of songs for voice and piano by Joyce Suskind (recorded on the *New York Women Composers* CD). Davis also has been involved in multiple premieres of works by David Gillingham, including works with percussion ensemble/piano and trumpet/piano. She has served as one of the official pianists for the International Double Reed Society, Musical Director of the Young Artists Opera Theater, the National Trumpet Competition, and on the faculties of Greensboro College, Elon University, Guest Lecturer for Song Repertoire at UNC Greensboro (currently the collaborative pianist with the Chamber Singers under the direction of William Young), the UNC Greensboro Community Music School, Salem College Community Music School and is a 33 year veteran faculty member of the UNC Greensboro Summer Music Camp. Davis serves as one of the official pianists for the National Association of Teachers of Singing Competitions.

Johnson has been heard with the Greensboro Symphony and the Greensboro Philharmonia, in guest artist recitals at the NC Museum of Art, Dickinson State University, University of Wisconsin, the Baltimore Composers Forum, The Schubert Club Courtroom Concert Series, on Minnesota Public Radio with the Ted Mann Vocal Quartet, and WXXI Radio with flutist Nina Assimakopoulos. She has served as the invited pianist for master classes of Eugene Rousseau and Keith Underwood. Johnson has also been one of the official pianists for the International Horn Prize Competition, the International Tuba/Euphonium and Double Reed Society Conferences, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing Competitions. In May 2017, she was chosen as one of four pianists to participate in the Fall Island Repertoire Development Program. As primary keyboard/assistant director of the Continental Singers, Johnson has toured the United States, Asia, and Europe. Recently, she formed a partnership with saxophonist Chisato Eda as *Duo du Soleil*. As well, Johnson has begun a recital/masterclass exchange program with David Klassen, baritone (Manitoba, Canada) partnering at venues in the United States and Canada. Faculty positions held include Greensboro College, The Music Center of Greensboro, The Wesleyan Institute of Music and Arts, UNC Greensboro's Summer Music Camp and charter faculty member piano/collaborative piano at the Vivace String Camp (New York). Johnson completed the DMA in accompanying and coaching at the University of Minnesota, (studying with Margo Garrett, Karl Paulnack, and Tim Lovelace), where she was a teaching assistant and a Denny Scholar. Currently, she is Associate Professor of Piano and Collaborative Piano at Houghton College (NY).

Described as a "true musical talent and professional," **Eric Willie** has performed as a soloist, clinician, and conductor throughout Europe, South America, and the United States. Some recent highlights include performances at *Drumfest Russia* in Moscow; performing as a soloist with the *Tamborimba Ensemble* in Cali, Colombia; and conducting Edgard Varese's *Ionisation* in the *Encontro Percussivo III* in Recife, Pernambuco Brazil. In addition to his solo projects, Eric regularly performs with the LegalWood and Nief-Norf Projects, and as a member of the percussion sections of the Winston-Salem Symphony and the New Hampshire Music Festival.

A long-time marching percussion educator and arranger, Eric has served on the faculties of the Carolina Crown, Cavaliers, Madison Scouts, Music City Mystique, Spirit of Atlanta, and Southwind Drum and Bugle Corps, as well as serving as a Percussion Consultant with the Phantom Regiment. In addition, his marching percussion arrangements have been performed by such universities as the University of North Texas, University of Kentucky, and Murray State University.

Currently, Eric is Associate Professor of Percussion at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, and resides in town with his wife Rebecca their two children. Eric is a proud endorser for Innovative Percussion, Black Swamp

Percussion, Evans Drumheads, Pearl/Adams Percussion, and Meinl Cymbals. His books and compositions have been published by Innovative Percussion, Row-Loff Productions, and TapSpace Publications; and video tutorials have recently been released with Innovative Percussion, and Meinl Band and Orchestra Cymbals.

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*Selected Upcoming Events:*

**January 18, 2020, 7:30 pm, Wesley Chapel:**

**Artist Series**—Paul Galbraith & Antonio Meneses, guitar/cello duo

**February 17, 2020, 7:30 pm, Wesley Chapel:**

**Artist Series**—Barbara Hull, trumpet

**February 20, 2020, 7:30 pm, Wesley Chapel:**

**Guest Recital**—Fabio Mechetti, piano

**We would like to thank the Houghton College administration for its faithful support of the Greatbatch School of Music.**

*Shirley A. Mullen*, President

*Paul Young*, Dean of the Faculty

*Dale Wright*, Chief Financial Officer

*Greatbatch School of Music Faculty, Staff, and Administration*

As a courtesy to the performer and your fellow audience members, please be certain that all cell phones, watch alarms, and pagers are either turned off or set for silent operation. Flash photography can be very disconcerting to performers and is not permitted during the performance. Thanks for your cooperation.

## Program Notes

*This is the world we know, the world of air and breathing and sun and beating hearts:* Our concerts this season feature a unique combination of music for two pianos, as well as the addition of a master percussionist, Eric Willie. Opening with a suite from Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* for two pianos, **Music By Two** is joined by Willie in David Maslanka's *This Is The World*, a work whose "...overall feeling...is one of quiet awe at the nature of our world, both the planet...and the amazing web of life that it supports..." These two exquisite works are connected at their foundations by the music of Bach, as Maslanka masterfully weaves melodies from Bach chorales with his own inimitable style and voice, through "...moments of ferocity, whimsy, and grandeur."

Johann Sebastian Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* was first performed in 1727 at the St. Thomas Church in Leipzig, Germany. Depicting the final sufferings and crucifixion of Christ, it sets chapters 26 and 27 of the Gospel of Matthew to music using recitatives and arias set to a libretto by Picander (pen name of Christian Friedrich Henrici), a contemporary of Bach; also part of the Passion are 15 chorales that have their roots in liturgy. Tonight's performance is an arrangement for two pianos by Greg Anderson of five movements from the original work: three arias—*Erbarme Dich* for alto; *Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben* for soprano; *Mache dich, mein Herze, rein* for bass; and two chorales—*Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese Strafe!* and *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*.

***Erbarme Dich*** follows a recitative that tells of Peter's repeated denial of Jesus: "the aria itself expresses Peter's penitence through...lamenting words: *Have mercy, My God, for my tears' sake! Look hither, my heart and eyes weep before you bitterly.*" One can hear Peter weeping through Bach's use of "...appoggiaturas, descending bass lines, and piercing dissonances..."

***Wie wunderbarlich ist doch diese Strafe!*** is a chorale sung after the crowd has shouted for Jesus to be crucified: *How amazing is this punishment! The good Shepherd suffers for His sheep, as righteous as he is, the master pays the penalty for his servants.*

***Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben***, sung by a soprano is "...at once sad, heavenly, and bleakly sparse...underlines one of the central themes of the passion: that Christ died for the love of humankind": *Out of love, Out of love my Savior is willing to die, Though He knows nothing of any sin, so that eternal ruin and the punishment of judgment may not rest upon my soul.*

***O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden***, the well-known "O sacred head" chorale, is based on a medieval Latin poem, translated into German by Paul Gerhardt in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century; the original melody is by Hans Leo Hassler (around 1600), later simplified by Johann Crüger, and finally reharmonized by Bach for his passion: *O head, full of blood and wounds, full of sorrow and full of scorn, O head, bound in mockery with a crown of thorns, O head, once beautifully adorned with highest honor and renown, but now shamefully mistreated, let me hail Thee!*

Near the conclusion of the Passion is the bass aria ***Mache dich, mein Herze, rein*** calls the believer in Christ to allow His life and sacrifice to live through them: *Make yourself pure, my heart, for I will bury Jesus within me, for now within me, He shall for ever and ever take His sweet rest. World, leave my heart, and let Jesus enter!*

Greg Anderson writes the following in his notes for this arrangement: "...the structure of both the *St. Matthew Passion* and this arrangement follow Martin Luther's 'A Meditation on Christ's Passion,' written in 1519. Luther first asks the believer to repent his own guilt and show remorse (*Erbarme dich*), then recognize that Christ suffered for our sins (the chorales) and that His love will conquer all (*Aus Liebe will mein Heiland sterben*). Having undertaken these earlier stages, the believer can finally accept Christ into his life and live following Christ's example (*Mache dich mein Herze, rein*)."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Translations and quotes gathered from Greg Anderson's notes for the *St. Matthew Passion—Suite for Two Pianos*, Alfred Music Publishing, 2013.

American composer, **David Maslanka** was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts. His musical studies took place at Oberlin College-Conservatory, the Mozarteum in Austria, and Michigan State University. Maslanka's principal composition teachers were Joseph Wood and H. Owen Read. Especially well known in his compositional output is music for winds: amongst his 150 works, over 50 are for wind ensemble (symphonies, concertos, and a Mass); chamber works include many for winds and saxophones. Western New York had a special connection for Maslanka, as he was on faculty at SUNY Geneseo from 1970-1974. It has been said of his work that "He could paint a picture for you through music that was so real that it helped you interpret aspects of life...His music just reaches out and grabs you." (Kevin Sedatole of Michigan State University).

Maslanka's own words seem to best describe the movements of this riveting work:

"The overall feeling of *This is the World* is one of quiet awe at the nature of our world, both the planet on which we live, and the amazing web of life that it supports – not only that but its place, and our place in the universal web of life...

The *Nighthawks* painting of Edward Hopper is his iconic contribution to American culture. It is one of my favorite paintings. It captures something absolutely fundamental about the American experience, and that is expressed probably more by the architecture of the picture – the amazing collection of shapes, and the relationship of light to dark, especially the overwhelming darkness – than by the unspoken "story" of the diner and the people in it. My music expresses some aspects of my own take on the "story," especially the hidden life in the blank windows of the building in the background, but my overall composition is, as well, a parallel to Hopper's lifelong preoccupation with shapes and light. He managed to convey powerful unspoken human and universal elements through abstract forms.

The very sweet melody and luminous harmonies of '**Do You Know My Name?**' touch me in a very hard way every time I play through this music. The melody is derived very loosely from the Bach chorale *On the Fortieth Day After Easter (Als vierzig Tag' nach Ostern war'n, BWV 266)*. The title 'Do You Know My Name' comes with no further explanation....

'**Out of the Blue**' grows out of the Chorale melody *Christ is Risen (Christ ist erstanden, BWV 276)*. This melody has an inexpressible mystery in it for me, and I have used variations of it in several other compositions. 'Out of the Blue' suggests the sudden arrival of something surprising – in this case a luminous joy.

'**The Closer You Get, the Stranger the Stars Look...**' began as a whimsical pastel drawing that I made some years ago. The stars are square(!), one is a Cheshire cat, one has a "message for you," one has horns and fangs. This quiet and whimsical music suggests a deep listening to one's innermost self.

'**Let It Be**' embodies yet another chorale melody: *Lord, Do Not Be Angry With Me (Herr, straf mich nicht in deinem Zorn, BWV 338)*. The music is a deep prayer for peace within, peace with others, peace with our beautiful world, and the emergence of our lives as children of the universe."

For *Music By Two* the connection between these two works—*St. Matthew Passion* and *This Is The World...* is fascinating: although the *St. Matthew Passion* does not address the resurrection of Christ, the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of the Maslanka does with the *Christ is Risen* chorale foundation. The last movement of each work completes the circle by their aria and chorale texts: Christ dwelling within (*St. Matthew Passion*) and a prayer for peace (*Lord Do Not Be Angry...chorale*). Go in peace.