



**Masters in VOICE II –
“In Honor of the Work”
Composer Michael Ching & Friends**

Sponsored by Jan and Sam Durham
and Toby Hollenberg
Originally Aired August 19, 2020

The Toaster Song from *Speed Dating Tonight!* by Michael Ching
Commissioned by Kathie and Les Anderson
Zachary Sebek, tenor
Michael Ching, piano

Michael Ching Tribute by Maria Zouves
Keep Savannah, Savannah from *Anna Hunter* by Michael Ching
Maria Zouves, soprano
Live Performance at the Davenport House Museum in 2017

A Zoom Chat with composer, Libby Larson
No. 1 – Katherine of Aragon from *Try Me, Good King: Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII*
A Song Cycle by Libby Larsen
Ripley Lucas-Tagliani, soprano
Peiwen Chen, piano

The Lord’s Prayer from *Alice Ryley, a Savannah Ghost Story* by Michael Ching
Commissioned by the Savannah VOICE Festival
Liz Lang, soprano
Michael Ching, piano
Video edited by Liz Lang and Michael A. Ferrara

A Zoom Chat with composer, Patrick Vu
In Between
Music by Patrick Vu
Text by Audrey Burchfield
Audrey Burchfield, mezzo-soprano
Patrick Vu, piano

Art Matters
“The Squares of Savannah”
Letter to Oglethorpe from *Alice Ryley, a Savannah Ghost Story* by Michael Ching
Jessica Ann Best, mezzo-soprano
Live world premiere performance in 2015
Postcards and images provided by:
V&J Duncan Antique Maps & Prints
City of Savannah Municipal Archives

A Zoom Chat with composer, Scott Joiner
Excerpt from *Abendempfindung* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
Scott Joiner, tenor
Timothy L. Hall, piano
Mother to Son by Scott Joiner

Poem by Langston Hughes
Conceived and sung by Mathew Gamble
Jason Thomas, piano
Chanel Howard, dancer and choreographer
Jessica Fishenfeld, direction and editor

Postcards from Savannah

Davenport House Museum and *Anna Hunter*

Jamie Credle, director
Excerpt from **City Market Callers** from *Anna Hunter* by Michael Ching
Featuring the Savannah Arts Academy Chorus
Russell Watkins, director
Video edited by Theophilos Z. Milnes

Fugue from *Anna Hunter* by Michael Ching

Sean Christensen, Cloe SanAntonio, Chad Sonka, Tiana Sorenson, Maria Zouves
Michael Ching, piano
Video edited by Theophilos Z. Milnes

The Bow Tie Duet from *Speed Dating Tonight!* by Michael Ching

Commissioned by Julia and Wes Krulic
Jessica Fishenfeld, soprano
Scott Joiner, tenor
Michael Ching, piano

Inside the VOICE Studio

Joseph Calzada, baritone | Milnes VOICE Studio Artist

If Not Now, When? from *Speed Dating Tonight!* by Michael Ching

2018 Florida VOICE Project Artists/2020 Milnes VOICE Studio Artists

Unless otherwise noted, tonight's performance is edited by Maria Zouves.

The Masters in VOICE program is supported in part by Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. Georgia Council for the Arts also receives support from its partner agency – the National Endowment for the Arts.



Biographies

Michael Ching is a composer, songwriter, conductor, and former arts administrator. His recent opera, *Speed Dating Tonight!* was commissioned and premiered by the Janiec Opera Company of the Brevard Music Center. Since its premiere in July 2013, *Speed Dating Tonight!* has been produced fifteen times, including professional productions at Tri-Cities Opera, Amarillo Opera, and Microscopic Opera (Pittsburgh), and universities such as UT-Austin, the University of Memphis, Ithaca College, and the University of Central Florida. His 1996 opera *Buoso's Ghost* is a sequel to *Gianni Schicchi*. It has proved lasting, with recent performances at Texas State University and the UNC-Chapel Hill. It will be performed at University of Central Florida next season. His 2010 opera, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, opera a cappella was premiered by Opera Memphis, Playhouse on the Square, and DeltaCappella. A CD featuring the original cast was released on Albany Records in 2014. Other works include *Corps of Discovery*, commissioned by the University of

Missouri to commemorate the Lewis and Clark Expedition and several one act operas. From 1993-2010, Michael was Artistic Director of Opera Memphis, where he was also General Director for much of the period. While at Opera Memphis, he participated in the seven million dollar campaign to build the Clark Opera Memphis Center, a headquarters and rehearsal studio for the company. He is currently Music Director of Nickel City Opera in Western New York, where he recently conducted their production of *The Marriage of Figaro*. This fall he will conduct his new orchestral reduction of Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe* at Amarillo Opera. Other guest conducting engagements have included companies in Honolulu, Nashville, Fargo, and New Jersey. Michael has served on the artistic staffs of the opera companies of Miami, Virginia, and Chautauqua, and was trained at the Houston Opera Studio, where he studied opera composition with Carlisle Floyd. Michael attended Duke University where his composition teacher was Robert Ward. Michael lives with family in Ames, Iowa.

Tenor **Scott Joiner**, "unleashed a lovely lyric sound" (*Opera News*) for his 2016 Carnegie Hall debut in Richard Strauss's *Friedenstag* with the American Symphony Orchestra. In 2018, he returned to the venue for the US Premiere of Patrick Hawes's *The Great War Symphony* conducted by the composer for the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice. Joiner made his San Francisco Opera debut as Dickon in the premiere of Gasser's opera *The Secret Garden*. 2019 appearances included Ernesto in Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* at North Shore Music Festival as well as appearances with On Site Opera and City Lyric Opera at Steinway Hall. A past winner of the Heafner/Williams Vocal Competition and Metropolitan Opera Regional Finalist, some of Joiner's other performances include Opera Colorado, Central City Opera, Knoxville Opera, St Petersburg Opera, Teatro Magnani, Asheville Symphony and the Colorado Music Festival. He was a Festival Artist for the 2018 Savannah VOICE Festival. In 2020 Joiner premiered the role of Yassine in *A Sweet Silence* in Cremona by Roberto Scarcella Perrino and Mark Campbell; and joined New York's Modern Opera Company reprising the role of Graham in his own composition *The Tinder Opera*, for which he was previously featured on NPR's All Things Considered.

Libby Larsen (b. 24 December 1950, Wilmington, Delaware) is one of America's most prolific and most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 500 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over 15 operas. Her music has been praised for its dynamic, deeply inspired, and vigorous contemporary American spirit. Constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, Libby Larsen has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory.

Patrick Vu is a senior from Allen, Texas and is currently pursuing a double major in Vocal Music Education and Music Composition at TCU in Fort Worth, Texas. While Patrick enjoys composing music for instrumental chamber ensembles, he especially loves writing choral music and art song and has been commissioned by students, professors, and professionals across the DFW Metroplex. This past spring, Vu was named the winner of the student category for the 2020 TCU School of Music Call for Scores Competition with his Trumpet Fanfare; this piece will be premiered during the grand opening of the new TCU Music Center this coming fall. His music mostly remains self-published, but his choral compositions can be found in the Alliance Music Publications catalog.

Song Texts

In Between by Audrey Burchfield

Sleep, this doesn't feel like sleep
When dreams keep rest and peace just out of reach.
Home just doesn't feel like home
When you hear the floorboards creak from only just two feet.

And love just doesn't feel like love
With this much distance in between.
And rich? This doesn't feel like rich.
I'm pocket poor, but I still have a lot to give.

And work, this doesn't feel like work.
As I sing, I live a life I know I don't deserve.
But as for love, this song's as close as I get
With this much distance in between.

It's sad I'd rather stay home and drink until it's unclear,
To forget you're just fine without me near.
'Cause what's the point of a party without you here?
Will I miss every party waiting on you, dear?

Because Love, I thought you'd chase after me,
Not make more distance in between.
So if you want to go home now,
I'll take you home.

Mother to Son by Langston Hughes
(Mother, mother...)

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I've been a-climbin' on,

And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn (your) back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you (feel) it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I've still goin', honey,
I've still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

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