PROGRAM

Remarks

Dr. Dennis AsKew, Director
School of Music

Too Serious Songs (1965–1966)
Christopher C. Tew
(UNCG Class of ‘69)

I. Snow
Poem by Paula Gulledge Swepston (UNCG Class of ’69)

II. Swiftly Came Death
Text by the composer

Victoria Erickson, soprano (MM ‘19)
Inara Zandmane, piano

Sonata Movement for Viola and Piano (1967)
Tew

Scott Rawls, viola
James Douglass, piano

Remarks

Dr. Lawrence Jenkens, Interim Dean
College of Visual and Performing Arts

Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies (1990)
Tew

for Chamber Strings and Harp (excerpt)

Nicoletta Moss, conductor (MM ‘20)
from A Picture Symphony for Strings (1991)

IV. Finale: Variations and Theme—Country Idyll


II. Preghièra (Matthew 6:5–6)

Remarks

Dr. Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., Chancellor
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro


Sharneshia Joyner (BM ‘19)
(b. 1996)

3 Panoramas: Memories of Japan (2011)

I. Dawn to Dawn: City Life
II. Nocturne: Mountains and Sea by Moonlight
III. Beppu no Jigoku: The Hells of Beppu

Nicoletta Moss, conductor
TOO SERIOUS SONGS

Too Serious Songs was composed during 1965-66 at UNCG. The text for Snow is a poem by Paula Gulledge Swepston, also a graduate in our UNCG Class of ’69 and a friend of mine since our years together at Greensboro’s Page HS. Swiftly Came Death has my words for its text. Both songs use onomatopoetic devices: Snow mimics the imagined sounds of a gentle snowfall; Swiftly the hoof beats of Death’s mount as He makes His rounds and the tolling of village bells. Both are in three-part form: a beginning melody, a different melody in the middle, and a return to the beginning melody. Swiftly has a few pictorial excursions for the piano.

Our Class of ’69 had seen three political assassinations, the deaths of thousands of brave service men and women, and the torture and imprisonment of true American heroes. Current events have always affected the tone and subject matter of art, and music is no exception. These songs reflected their times through metaphor and legend.

SONATA MOVEMENT FOR VIOLA AND PIANO

Sonata Movement for Viola and Piano was begun during my 1967 semester at NCSA and was finished several years later. It has an exposition with two melodies: the first is very angular and bouncy, with its harmony mostly based on chords of fourths (A-D-G-C, for example); the second is more song-like with harmonies based on thirds (A-C-E-G, but often with added notes A-C-D-E-G). Both make great use of syncopation. Next is a development section that explores different ways of using and abusing these melodies and harmonies, finally combining them. A recapitulation repeats the two melodies with some elaboration, and a concluding section gives the violist opportunity for improvisation before the piece reaches an unexpectedly peaceful end.

RHAPSODY ON JEWISH FOLK MELODIES

Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies (excerpt) was composed at the request of a great music educator, Rubin Sher, who in 1986 had started a community orchestra at Louisville’s Jewish Community Center. Rubin had earlier performed other pieces of mine and wanted something special for Jewish Music Month (February). As a rhapsody, there is no set form that I had to follow. I made up a simple story about a grandparent and grandchild at bedtime, where the child asks, “What was life like in the Old Country?” The Rhapsody then uses a fragment of a lullaby to link songs that offer glimpses of that life. This excerpt begins with the lullaby fragment hidden among elaborations by the harp and string soloists. This soon falls into “Tumbalalaika (Strum, Balalaika),” a waltz-like love song that becomes increasingly impassioned until the solo violin leads to the wedding song “Chussen Kalle Mazel Tov (Blessings on the Bride and Groom).” This is followed by festive reprises of melodies heard earlier in the Rhapsody, “Haveinu Shalom Aleichem (Peace Be With You)” and “Baigelach, Koift Heisenke Baigelach (Bagels, Buy Hot Bagels),” before a rousing return of the wedding
song which builds to a climax with a very brief hint of the solemn prayer “Elli, Elli (based on Isaiah and historical events).” The Rhapsody concludes with the lullaby fragment and then vanishes as a dream, as life in the Old Country largely vanished with the tragedies of pogroms, wars, and the Holocaust.

A PICTURE SYMPHONY FOR STRINGS

A Picture Symphony for Strings: Finale-Variations and Theme-Country Idyll, is the concluding movement of a four-movement work begun while I was a student at Page HS, though this movement dates to the 1990s. Its title is unusual because traditionally the variations are composed after the theme, but in this case a theme was composed last to unify previously existing music.

An original, folk song-like Theme begins the work and is shared in turn by the ‘cellos, violas, second violins, double basses, and first violins. The subsequent variations alternate between original material and three fiddle tunes, slightly modified to be variations, that I had come across while researching music for an historic site dedication concert years earlier: an original galumphing cowboy dance, “Blackberry Blossom,” an original jig for ‘cellos with the hymn/fiddle tune “Legacy” played in the middle, a soaring melody based on what musicians call “horn fifths” that it shares with the cowboy tune, Haning’s Farewell” by the violas and second violins, and reprises of “Blackberry Blossom” and the soaring melody before the Theme returns. A short ending offers another semi-variation and hints of the beginning of the symphony’s first movement.

THE GIRLS PREPARATORY SCHOOL SUITE

The Girls Preparatory School Suite was composed in 2005 for the 100th anniversary of this private school in Chattanooga. The commission was encouraged by Richard Cormier, former conductor of the Charlotte and Chattanooga Symphonies and at that time conductor of the Chamber Orchestra of Tennessee. The commission stipulated that two movements had to be short enough for use at assemblies and chapel, four minutes. Preghièra (Matthew 6:5-6) is the suite’s second movement.

The initial melody, played by a solo violin, sings its original theme to the rhythm of “Girls Preparatory School.” This is expanded by other soloists and the full string orchestra until a sudden, simple transitional measure leads to an ostinato of repeated notes that accompany the prayer melody, played by the violins (careful listeners will notice that this melody begins with the same rhythm as the first melody), then in altered form by the violas and ‘cellos, and again in its original form by the violins playing in octaves. When the initial melody returns, it is accompanied by ostinato patterns from the prayer melody until it transforms briefly into a hymn of praise. As the movement ends, the double basses hint at the ostinato and prayer melody.

The Girls Preparatory School Suite commission involved several visits to the school to observe what made GPS special, and to work with the school’s wonderful orchestra director and dedicated music educator, Mary Baxter, and her talented students.
3 Panoramas: Memories of Japan

was sketched out shortly after Laura and I visited former exchange students and their families in Japan in 1986, at the peak of Japan’s economic boom, but the sketches were never put in a finished form. I returned to this work in 2011 and added here, cut there, and thoroughly revised the material. There are three movements depicting some of the complexity and beauty that we saw in the cities and countryside, and reflecting the wonderful welcome we received from everyone, friends and strangers, that we met.

Dawn to Dawn: City Life

Nature and business stir as the sun rises over Tokyo Bay. The sunrise transforms into pounding factory machinery and the bustle of a nation at work. A dynamic Big Tune bursts out followed by a gentler countermelody. A short development of the Big Tune leads to more factory sounds and a repeat of the Big Tune and countermelody. The factory sounds return, but become regretful reminders of the destruction, natural and man-made, that has visited Japan’s great cities. Yasukuni Shrine and museum. A more somber dawn closes the movement.

Nocturne: Mountains and Seas by Moonlight

The often lush opening has sections that change meter from 5 to 3 to 4 and back to 3 beats per measure. The melodies play out over hints of deep waters, waves, and breezes, or are they distant volcanic peaks cloaked with wafting snow and gossamer clouds? A Big Tune announces the moon, shining by the sun’s reflected light. Clouds and mysteries and maybe a hint of ancient adventure. The moon reappears, and a short transition returns to the opening melodies. The moon again, its full brilliance lighting the way to a gentle conclusion, though one veiled by mystery.

Beppu no Jigoku: The Hells of Beppu

Beautiful geothermal pools, colored by the bacteria and algae that make them their homes, lie side-by-side with touristy, carnival-like attractions. A danse infernal in one key proceeds oblivious to clashes with its bass line and accompaniment in a different key. Plucked strings sound out the roiling pools, bursting mud-bubbles, and mini-geysers. A brash carnival atmosphere produces a catch-as-catch-can melange of monkeys scampering about, grabbing what visitors leave unguarded. Double basses groan and plod a ponderous tune (the monkey scampering, four times slower) as imported hippopotami luxuriate in a warm pool. The first section repeats in reverse, reaches a climax, and seems to calm itself, but then is thrown once more into eruptive turmoil before three strange, crashing chords lead to the bright C major end.

Even though 3 Panoramas: Memories of Japan has been recorded, this is its premiere performance before a live audience.

MY MUSICAL JOURNEY — FULL CIRCLE

My musical aspirations have been realized because of the encouragement and support of many talented conductors and musicians. Ms Lucy Still, Louis LaBella, and Dr. Albert Chaffoo were teachers at Page HS who were invaluable in my development, as were the student orchestra players who first performed my music, including Elegy for Strings: November 1963 and the first movement of the Picture Symphony. During this time an orchestral overture was performed at the NC Governor’s School. Mr. George Dickieson at UNCG performed the Elegy and a
second orchestral overture, the first two student compositions performed by the UNCG Sinfonia and Orchestra.

Laura and I married in the time between our final exams and graduation in 1969, and soon moved to Durham. While there, Dr. Chaffoo performed the _Elegy_ and first overture with orchestras he had started in Salisbury and Hickory.

At Laura’s suggestion, I combined the better parts of the two overtures. Eduardo Ostergren, who had started a student-faculty-community orchestra at NCSU performed the _Elegy_ and the combined overture, renamed _Atridae - The House of Atreus_.

Laura’s career took off in 1976. During the following 33 years we experienced several corporate moves which created critical musical opportunities and collaborations for me. Rubin Sher’s influence has been mentioned, but our time in the Louisville area also brought friendship with Wil Greckel, a composer for whom I did some computerized score settings and from whom I learned much.

In 1981 Laura’s work took us to Connecticut, where the _Picture Symphony_ took its ultimate form and was performed by the Fairfield Strings under John Swarz. In 1988 we were back near Louisville in Corydon, Indiana. It was at this point that Rubin asked for the _Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies_, and as a result of that work, Leonard Atherton, Ball State University and Muncie, Indiana Symphony Orchestra conductor, asked me to compose _An Overture for Hanukkah_, which has become my most often played composition.

Laura became the plant manager in Livonia, Michigan in 1990. There, Frank DiBlasi, conductor of the Livonia Symphony Orchestra, performed the _Elegy_, and when Volodymyr Shesiuk became conductor of the LSO, he repeated the _Elegy_ in a memorial concert for the victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, and then sent the music to friends in Ukraine for performance at a festival of American and Ukrainian music. He has also performed the _Picture Symphony_, the _GPS Suite_, the orchestral works _Atridae_, _Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies_, _An Overture for Hanukkah_, and _Winds of Freedom_, and also _Froggy_ for mixed chorus, piano, clarinet, and strings. Volodymyr has been a dear friend for many years.

In 1993 Laura’s work took us to Lake Charles, Louisiana where I played viola in the city’s symphony under the baton of William Kushner, playwright Tony Kushner’s father. Kushner performed _An Overture for Hanukkah_, and I renewed the acquaintance of my old NCSA roommate, composer Keith Gates.

From Lake Charles Laura was transferred to Charleston, Tennessee, and we lived in Ooltewah halfway between Charleston and Chattanooga. While there I played in the Southern Adventist University Orchestra under a wonderful educator, Orlo Gilbert. Richard Hickam, conducting student at SAU and later founder of the Eastern Tennessee Symphony Orchestra, performed the _Picture Symphony_ and led multiple Fourth of July performances of _Winds of Freedom_.

Richard Cormier, as already mentioned, was responsible for the _GPS Suite_ and also _Froggy_. He was preparing the premier performance of _Lux et Umbra (Light and Shadow) Scenes for Organ and Strings_ at the time of his death from a hospital infection, and it was performed at his memorial concert. The chamber version of _Rhapsody on Jewish Folk Melodies_ was done with his COOT (he delighted in this moniker) group in mind, and his influence as a dear friend and confidant permeates _3 Panoramas_.

In the meantime, Eduardo Ostergren had relocated to his native Brazil, where he performed the *GPS Suite* as well as *Lux et Umbra*.

In 2006 we moved back here to help my mother and to enjoy Greensboro’s many cultural opportunities. Here I finished work on *3 Panoramas*, and in 2013 and 2014 we went to Bratislava, Slovakia where David Hernando Rico and the Bratislava Symphony Orchestra recorded many of my compositions. I later began playing with the Greensboro Philharmonia under Peter Perret, who recently performed *Atridae*. I never left a rehearsal with Peter and the Philharmonia without feeling enriched by his depth of knowledge and the camaraderie of fellow musicians, including a friend from the Page HS orchestra. I regret that health issues have ended this wonderful experience.

To all these outstanding conductors and their dedicated musicians, and many more besides, I owe debts of great gratitude, second only to the gratitude I owe Laura for being my unfailing supporter, greatest inspiration, and most trusted critic for over 50 years.

**WHO AM I?**

Funded by the Lloyd Artist in Residence Award, I proposed an 8-movement music and dance piece that explored that definition of what a person could be in relation to others around them. The entire work contains combinations of instruments, but the first movement, *Who Am I?*, was written for two violins and one cello. After the premiere in October of 2018, I decided to expand on this piece and arrange it for a slightly larger chamber string orchestra.

**PERSONNEL**

**VIOLIN I**  
Marjorie Bagley*  
Luke Stikeleather, Statesville  
Lalia Mangione, Belmont, MI  
Alexei Mejouev, Wilmington

**VIOLIN II**  
Tracy Viator, Lubbock, TX  
Corina Donica, High Point  
Madeleine Klee, St. Petersburg, FL  
Joshua Sukhdeo, Fairfax, VA

**VIOLA**  
Scott Rawls*  
Ashley Overby, Kettering, OH  
Katherine Bracewell, Oak Ridge

**CELLO**  
Alexander Ezerman*  
Peter Swanson, Duluth, MN  
Bethany Uhler, Boyertown, PA

**DOUBLE BASS**  
Peter Kim, Wagram

**HARP**  
Gennaro Porcaro, Princeton, NJ

**CONDUCTOR**  
Nicoletta Moss, Richmond, VA

*School of Music Faculty*
From a total population of 20,000 university students, the UNCG School of Music serves approximately 600 majors, making the UNCG School of Music one of the largest such schools in the South. Many performances are presented in historic UNCG Auditorium, a classic structure that recently underwent a $19 million renovation.

UNCG has long been recognized for having one of the elite music institutions in the United States. Fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music since 1938, the School offers the only comprehensive music program from undergraduate through doctoral study in both performance and music education in North Carolina. The School of Music occupies a $26 million building that is among the finest music facilities in the nation.

Living in the artistically thriving Greensboro—Winston-Salem—High Point “Triad” area, students enjoy regular opportunities to attend and perform with local and regional arts organizations. In addition, UNCG students interact first-hand with some of the world’s major artists who frequently schedule performances, master classes, open rehearsals, and informal discussions. Such guest artists have recently included Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, Lynn Harrell, “The President’s Own” United States Marine Band, Gerard Schwarz, Ryan Anthony, Marianne Gedigian, Amy Porter, Herbie Hancock, and Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra.

Performances by UNCG ensembles have been given at The Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City, Meymandi Concert Hall, The Music Center at Strathmore, and Dvořák Hall in Prague, Czech Republic. In addition, UNCG student ensembles have recorded over twenty-five commercially available recordings.

Costs of attending public universities in North Carolina, both for in-state and out-of-state students, represent a truly exceptional value in American higher education. This fact, coupled with the eminent reputation enjoyed by the UNCG School of Music, renders an education at UNCG one of the “best buys” on the college scene today.
Laura Braxton Tew ‘69 grew up on tobacco farms in Pitt County, North Carolina. Her interest in mathematics and science was sparked by public school teachers in Winterville. She considers UNCG her lucky break, an opportunity for work and study on campus while living in Gray, Guilford, Mary Foust, and Shaw dormitories. While at UNCG, she was an undergraduate research and teaching assistant, guided and mentored by members of the strong and gifted chemistry faculty under department chair Walter Puterbaugh.

Laura’s further educational initiatives included graduate studies in chemistry at Duke, an MBA from Pace University, and a Certificate in Corporate Citizenship from Boston College. She spent 37 years in the chemical manufacturing industry, working in ten states and on four continents and reaching for and breaking glass ceilings as she rose from the position of bench chemist to become Corporate Director of Stakeholder Relations with global responsibilities.

Upon retirement in 2009, Laura followed her proven approach in life, study first and then act. She earned a certificate in Non-profit Management from UNCG in 2013. This course of study, along with the year-long IMPACT Greensboro program at the Center for Creative Leadership, prepared her for an active life of volunteerism and philanthropy, always giving back to the community. She also made time to become a Master Gardener and serve on the board of Heads Up for Our Youth.

Her retirement bucket list has afforded many interesting opportunities, and she is currently following her passion to further the STEM pipeline for women through science and technology education for girls. Laura credits UNCG for its generosity in providing facilities and staff services for events coordinated with Women in STEM, her colleagues at the American Association of University Women.
Christopher Conrad Tew ‘69 realized his passion for concert music when he began taking viola lessons from Mrs. Lucy Still while a student at Aycock Junior High School in Greensboro. A tuition student from McLeansville, he found close friendships with other student musicians in school orchestras at Aycock and then Page High School.

Christopher participated in numerous performance opportunities in the Greensboro public schools, all-state orchestras, Governors School, and, most rewardingly, the Summer String Institute founded by Mr. George Dickieson at UNCG where he first studied music theory with Dr. Harold Luce. His support for public education, including the UNCG College of Visual and Performing Arts, is rooted in his deep appreciation for the opportunities and benefits he received, including his graduation from UNCG in 1969.

Christopher began composing while at Aycock, and was able to hear those early works performed there, at Page, and at the Governor’s School. While at UNCG, his compositions were the first student works performed by the UNCG Sinfonia and Symphony. His music was subsequently performed by the Salisbury and Hickory Symphonies and the NCSU Orchestra.

In the fifty years since graduation, Christopher has composed concert music for school, community, and professional orchestras. He has received commissions from groups as diverse as Louisville’s Jewish Community Center and Chattanooga’s Girls Preparatory School, as well as the Muncie Symphony Orchestra and the Chamber Orchestra of Tennessee.

His works have been performed by professional orchestras from Livonia, Michigan to Lake Charles, Louisiana and West Hartford, Connecticut to Lone Tree, Colorado, and at a music festival in Lviv, Ukraine. The Bratislava Symphony Orchestra in Slovakia has recorded two CDs, including most of the works in tonight’s program.
Scott Rawls

Violist Scott Rawls has appeared as soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Europe. Recent chamber music endeavors include performances with Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Bill Preucil, Kurt Nikkanen, Paul Rosenthal, Jinjoo Cho, Zuill Bailey, and Sergey Antonov. Last season, he was a featured artist at chamber festivals ranging from Sitka Summer Chamber Music Festival and El Paso Pro Musica to Northwest Bach Festival. His solo and chamber music recordings can be heard on the Centaur, CRI, Nonesuch, Capstone, and Philips labels.

A strong proponent of new music, Rawls has premiered dozens of new works by prominent composers. Most notable, he has toured extensively as a member of Steve Reich and Musicians. As the violist in this ensemble, he performed the numerous premieres of *Daniel Variations*, *The Cave* and *Three Tales* by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, videographer. And under the auspices of presenting organizations such as the Wiener Festwochen, Festival d’Automne a Paris, Holland Festival, Berlin Festival, Spoleto Festival USA and the Lincoln Center Festival, he has performed in major music centers around the world including London, Vienna, Rome, Milan, Tokyo, Prague, Amsterdam, Brussels, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

Under the baton of maestro Dmitry Sitkovetsky, he plays principal viola in the Greensboro Symphony Orchestra. And during the summers, Rawls plays principal viola in the festival orchestra at Brevard Music Center where he also coordinates the viola program.

Dr. Rawls currently serves as Professor of Viola and Chamber Music at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He holds a BM degree from Indiana University and a MM and DMA from State University of New York at Stony Brook. His major mentors include Abraham Skernick, Georges Janzer, John Graham and Julius Levine.

Sharneisha Joyner

Composer Sharneisha Marie Joyner has worked on using music as a tool to collaborate with other art forms such as theatre, dance, and an intense concentration in film. Joyner has had the opportunity to compose music for a North Carolina Documentary film. She is currently scoring the film for a student at New York University. Sharneisha has also had the opportunity to collaborate with two dance groups in creating a piece reflecting the dance that was already choreographed. This collaboration allowed for Joyner to study the
movement of the body and create music that reflected such movements. In this way, her collaboration with dance has both art forms at the forefront and equally uses both to express a story. She will currently have work featured on the UNCG School of Dance 2019 BFA Dance Thesis Concert. Outside of collaboration opportunities, Joyner enjoys composing programmatic works for chamber ensembles as well as large instrumental ensembles. She will be graduating in May of 2019 with her Bachelors in Music Composition from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and will be continuing her studies in the Fall of 2019 at the Royal College of Music in London, United Kingdom to begin a Masters program in Composition for Screen.

**Victoria Erickson**

Praised for her “beautifully ruby-throated quality” (*Classical Voice North Carolina*), Minnesota native **Victoria Erickson** is establishing herself as a promising and vibrant soprano. Most recently, Erickson won First Place in the Student Artist Division of the Saltworks Opera Vocal Competition in Cape Charles, Virginia and performed the leading role of Cookie in the 20th century piece *Talk Opera* (UNCG Opera Theatre). Other recent engagements include Liù in *Turandot* (North Carolina Summer Opera), Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, and Granny in a children’s touring opera production of *Little Red Riding Hood* (UNCG Opera Theatre). Erickson received an Encouragement Award at the Charlotte Opera Guild Competition (Opera Carolina) in both 2017 and 2018, and was a finalist for the Student Artist Competition at the UNCG School of Music.

Previously, she received a merit-based scholarship to attend Berlin Opera Academy and was awarded a Colburn Fellowship with SongFest in Los Angeles, California. Other opera credits include Maggie in *The Clever Artifice of Harriet and Margaret* (Really Spicy Opera), The Baron in an all-female production of *Cendrillon* (Garden of Song Opera) and Meg Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Fargo-Moorhead Opera-cover).

A versatile performer, Erickson has also appeared in musical theatre roles such as Rapunzel in *Into the Woods* (Phipps Center for the Arts, College Light Opera Company) and Hedy LaRue in *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (College Light Opera Company).

Erickson is currently pursuing her Master of Music in Voice at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro with a full tuition scholarship and assistantship, where she will be playing the role of Alice Ford in Verdi’s *Falstaff* this spring. Erickson looks forward to performing as Blanche in Poulenc’s *Dialogues des Carmélites* with Saltworks Opera in July 2019.