



The Music Department Presents

Songs and Cycles of Evan Mack

Megan Marino, Mezzo Soprano

Evan Mack, Piano

Friday, September 20, 2024, 7:30 PM

Arthur Zankel Music Center

Helen Filene Ladd Concert Hall

Program

A Little More Perfect (2015)

Hon. Justice Anthony Kennedy

Preach Sister, Preach (2017)

- I. Simone de Beauvoir
- II. Mae West
- III. Gilda Radner
- IV. George Eliot
- V. Lucille Ball (1)
- VI. Daphne de Maurier
- VII. Lizz Winstead
- VIII. Leslie Jones
- IX. Ann Landers
- X. Gloria Steinem
- XI. Natasha Scripture
- XII. Lucille Ball (2)
- XIII. Tina Fey
- XIV. Ellen DeGeneres

The Road and the End (Concert Premiere)

Carl Sandburg

From Page to Stage: A Brief Introduction with Poet, Alicia Cook

Stuff I've Been Feeling Lately
(World Premiere)

Alicia Cook

Program Notes

A Little More Perfect

Obergefell v. Hodges is a landmark United States Supreme Court case in which the Court held in a 5–4 decision that the fundamental right to marry is guaranteed to same-sex couples by both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote the majority opinion. This work is a setting of that last paragraph about marriage equality.

Preach Sister, Preach

The cycle was inspired after witnessing the 1st Women's March. After reading the Simone de Beauvoir quote, "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman," I started looking at hundreds of quotes by famous women about women. There were so many brilliant and funny quotes, where humor was used to upend many of the power dynamics at play.

The Road and the End

Carl Sandburg's poetry sits in that lovely space between two epochs. To me, his words have the ability to look back to a time that influenced his era, but written in a way that predicts the modernist poet movement going forward. This song was designed to highlight the grit and perseverance often needed to break through those generational changes and forge a path forward.

Stuff I've Been Feeling Lately

Alicia Cook's *Stuff I've Been Feeling Lately* is a poignant collection of poetry that explores the complexities of mental health, love, loss, and personal growth. Divided into two parts, Side A features traditional poems that convey raw emotions and intimate reflections on the challenges of living with anxiety, depression, and the grief of losing loved ones to addiction. Side B takes a more creative approach, as each poem from Side A is "remixed" into a blackout poem by isolating select words or phrases, creating new meanings and layers of interpretation.

When dealing with the complexities of these emotions, we are often feeling two sides of the same coin. When setting many of the poems to music, I decided to explore that duality by mixing the order in which the original poem or the redacted poem are presented, feeling what connections could be made by presenting different poems side by side, and ultimately rearranging the first poem in the finale, to feel how original emotions in the past can grow and transform, and form a new duality just by the sheer fact that you endured.

Bios

Believing that opera should be theater grounded in climatic expression that delivers larger-than-life stories and music that harnesses the full athletic thrill of singing, **Evan Mack** has devoted much of his compositional life to opera and song. His works include: *Angel of the Amazon*, *The Secret of Luca*, *Beach and Moan*, *#IsOperaDead*, *Roscoe*, *Lucinda y Las Flores de la Nochebuena*, *The Ghosts of Gatsby*, *Yeltsin in Texas!*, and *Dragon's Breath*, plus numerous song cycles and choral suites. Evan is a Senior Teaching Professor of Music in his 14th year, a Periclean Faculty Leader, and recipient of Skidmore's Presidential Award for Leadership and Service. He was named 2018 Musician of the Year by Musical America. In 2020, Mack founded *We Are Instrumental*, an organization that supports better access to music in K-12 public schools in the Adirondacks. Since 2020, WAI has distributed over 550 collected instruments to kids, piloted a virtual lesson program with students and Skidmore professors, and trained teachers and students in instrument repair to make the program sustainable. More at www.EvanMack.com.

A stylish musician, agile floritunist, and fearless stage animal, mezzo-soprano **Megan Marino** has been praised by Opera News as “a gifted actress with a strong, appealing voice, graced by a rich lower register,” who appears both “authoritative and carefree.” Her ability to disappear into a character grounds emotionally incisive performances across

genres and eras, and her open-hearted collaborative approach has made her a favorite colleague of creatives and performers across the industry.

A frequent presence at the Metropolitan Opera, Atlanta Opera, and Santa Fe Opera, Marino can be heard on several commercial recordings, including Weill's *Road of Promise* with MasterVoices at Carnegie Hall and Higdon's *Cold Mountain* with Santa Fe Opera. With her long-time recital partner, pianist John Arida, she recorded *It's You I Like*, an album of classically anchored music for children, and *The Travelled Road: The Music of Evan Mack*. Her concert credits include Händel's *Messiah* with Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, Mozart's *Requiem* with Boston Boys Choir, Bach's *St. John Passion* with American University of Beirut, Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Orchestra of St. Luke's at the Caramoor International Music Festival, and Haydn's *Mass No. 6* at Carnegie Hall.

A dual American and Italian citizen, Marino balances long stretches on the road with time at home in Colorado, where she enjoys outdoorsy adventures with her husband, baritone Michael Mayes, and their dog Peak.

Alicia Cook is a writer from New Jersey. Her work often focuses on addiction, mental health, and grief – sometimes all at once. She's published four full-length poetry collections with Andrews McMeel Publishing. She is best known for her "mixtape poetry series," which includes 2016's Goodreads Choice Awards Finalist *Stuff I've Been Feeling Lately*, 2020's Goodreads Choice Awards Semifinalist *Sorry I Haven't Texted You Back*, and 2024's *The Music Was Just Getting Good*. Her work has also been published in journals, anthologies, and prominent media outlets like The New York Times.

Cook's addiction awareness advocacy began years ago following the fatal overdose of her 19-year-old cousin. Through her writing, she started shedding light on how drug addiction impacts the mental health of families. An essayist and speaker, her activism to fight the

opioid epidemic is far-reaching and has garnered worldwide readership, with her work being translated into numerous languages and her own episode on the PBS series "Here's the Story." Over the years, the scope of her work broadened to include other sensitive topics impacting our lives today.

She has won several awards and has delivered many keynotes and one commencement address. She spends her free time watching Buffy The Vampire Slayer.

Upcoming Events

Sustain Film Series:
Buena Vista Social Club
Sunday, September 22, 2:30pm

Marc Ribot: The Kid
Saturday, September 28, 8:00pm

Diverse Voices for Flute
Sunday, September 29, 3:00pm

Sterne Virtuoso Series: Min Kwon
Friday, October 4, 7:00pm

Indian Classical Concert
Saturday, October 5, 4:00pm

Surround Concert Series:
Emel Mathlouthi
Sunday, October 6, 4:00pm

Tsou Music Scholar Lecture: Terrance
McKnight
Thursday, October 10, 6:00pm

Sustain Film Series:
Keyboard Fantasies
Sunday, October 13, 2:30pm

Schenectady-Saratoga
Symphony Orchestra
Saturday, October 19, 7:00pm

Ensemble Connect
Friday, October 25, 7:30pm

Surround Concert Series:
Tenzin Choegyal
Sunday, November 3, 4:00pm

Flore Laurentienne
Saturday, November 8, 7:30pm

Joseph Alpar & Friends:
Aşk: Music, Love, and Mysticism
In the Ottoman World
Saturday, November 16, 7:30pm

Sustain Film Series:
John Cage: Journeys in Sound
Sunday, November 17, 2:30pm

Skidmania '74
Friday, November 22, 8:00pm &
Saturday November 23, 8:00pm

Filene Scholar Celebration Concert
Friday, October 18, 7:00pm

Skidmore in Concert
November 23 through December 11