

# MOSTLY MINNESOTA ART SONG:

Songs by Barber, Campbell, Erickson, Larsen, Maurer, Phipps-Kettlewell, Rossi, and Thomas

Patricia Kent, Soprano  
Carolyn Finley, Mezzo-Soprano  
Edward Turley, Piano

From DIVINE IMAGES

Poems by William Blake

Piping Down the Valleys Wild  
Cradle Song  
The Little Boy Lost  
The Little Boy Found  
On Another's Sorrow  
Laughing Song

David Evan Thomas

Patricia Kent, Soprano  
Edward Turley, Piano

In a Certain Light  
To Darkness  
Too Cold to Snow  
If I Forget Your Face  
Raspberry Island

Karen Erickson  
Wynn-Anne Rossi  
George Maurer  
George Maurer  
Libby Larsen

Carolyn Finley, mezzo-soprano  
Edward Turley, piano

Lift Me into Heaven Slowly (Cowboy Songs)  
Invitation  
Nocturne  
I Hear an Army

Libby Larsen  
Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell  
Samuel Barber

Patricia Kent, Soprano  
Edward Turley, Piano

THIS IS MY LETTER TO THE WORLD:

Five Emily Dickinson Songs for mezzo-soprano and piano

I. "This is my letter to the world"  
II. "There's a certain slant of light"  
III. "Wild nights! Wild nights!"  
IV. "Look back on time with kindly eyes"  
V. "Because I could not stop for Death"

Brian G. Campbell

Carolyn Finley, Mezzo-Soprano  
Edward Turley, Piano



One of the most rewarding experiences an artist can have is to collaborate with a composer on the premiere of their work. As artists of song, we are re-creators of the vision set forth on paper by the composer and poet. This creative venture is much more enjoyable when a performer personally knows the composer and has easy access to them to discuss the intention behind their song. This has been the case with the majority of songs represented on this recording. Patricia, Edward and Carolyn want to thank George Maurer, Brian Campbell, Wynn-Anne Rossi, Karen Erickson, Libby Larsen, David Evan Thomas and Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell for entrusting their beautiful songs to us for this CD project.

### **Biographies and Program Notes:**

American composer and concert pianist **Samuel Barber** (1910–1981) composed works for opera, orchestra, chamber groups, solo piano as well as many memorable songs. Born in Pennsylvania and educated at the Curtis Institute, he is considered one of the leading composers of American song. “Adagio for Strings” composed in 1936 is perhaps his best-known work. Barber was a two-time recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for his opera *Vanessa* (1957) and his piano concerto (1962). “Nocturne,” set to a poem by American poet Frederick Prokosch, was published in 1940 and is the first of four songs in Opus 13. “I hear an army,” published in 1939, is one of three songs in Opus 10 with text by James Joyce. The musical settings of both of these songs--the first depicting a dream and the second depicting a nightmare--illustrates Barber’s genius at text setting, especially given the challenges of the avant garde text of Joyce.

**Brian Campbell** teaches music theory and composition at CSB/SJU. He has published and presented research papers on topics ranging from the music of Arnold Schoenberg to eighteenth-century musical aesthetics. Dr. Campbell is currently a member of Amadeus Chamber Orchestra in addition to regularly performing on Pastiche, the CSB/SJU Music Faculty concert series. Past experience as a professional trombonist includes performing with Minnesota Brassworks, the Minneapolis Pops Orchestra, and the Colorado Springs Symphony and Symphony Brass Quintet. He is a graduate of Oberlin College Conservatory of Music and holds graduate degrees from the University of Minnesota.

Dr. Campbell writes, “This is My Letter to the World: Five Emily Dickinson Songs was composed with the rich dark sound of Carolyn Finley’s mezzo-soprano voice in mind. I am most grateful that she and pianist Edward Turley have made this lovely recording. The poetry of Emily Dickinson is subtle, yet filled with passion and wonder—wonder about nature, life and death, and all the nooks and

crannies of the human soul. Yet she approaches these topics through the concrete here and now—sunlight on a winter afternoon, a sunset, and wind on the sea. I imagine the same woman singing all of the songs at different times of her life, and the five songs are arranged so that there is a progression toward the end of life. In the first song, for which the cycle is named, she makes a simple heart-felt plea for acceptance. In the second and third songs, ‘There’s a certain slant of light’ and ‘Wild nights! Wild nights!’ she expresses life’s deep sorrow and unquenchable passion, respectively. ‘Look back on time with kindly eyes’ is a wistful yet resigned reflection on a life that is soon coming to a close. Finally, the well-known poem ‘Because I could not stop for Death’ is a beautiful meditation on death as the woman’s soul leaves the familiar, yet now unattainable, world behind. My goal was to compose music that was true to Dickinson’s poetry—to its meaning, its intent, and its spirit. I like to think of the poem itself dictating the music that belongs with it—that is not the way it works of course, but that is the ideal in my mind. I hope my listeners will enjoy the songs and find that the music enhances the experiences of Dickinson’s poetry.”

**Dr. Karen Lynn Erickson** is a writer, composer, and Academic Dean at the College of St. Benedict / St. John's University. As professor, she has taught courses in French language and literature, Biblical women, and the history of interpretation. She has always been intrigued by the connections between poetry and music; her compositions include settings of Shakespeare song texts, medieval verse and her own poetry. Her works have been performed by faculty and students of CSB/SJU, the St. John's Boys' Choir, the Colledgeville Consort and other early music ensembles. “In a Certain Light”—composed with Carolyn Finley’s voice in mind—was set to the composer’s poem in memory of her grandmother, Minnie Ann Erickson. Erickson writes, “Hearing this poem at a reading, my friend Carolyn said the poem really ‘spoke to her,’ and told me she would gladly sing it if I set it to music. Though I had set other poets’ works for choir and soloist, and had written songs for guitar accompaniment as a young person (mostly with horrible, predictable lyrics), I had never set a poem of my own. This poem had provided me with an avenue for grief at the death of my grandmother, and it was a poignant challenge to shift from spoken to sung word. It is an honor and a joy to hear the work brought to life by Carolyn and Ed, such exquisite musicians and wonderful friends.”

**Libby Larsen** is one of America’s 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 twelve operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, including over fifty CDs of her work, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory. As a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time, in 1973 Larsen co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum, now the American Composer’s Forum. A former holder of the Papamarkou Chair at John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress, Larsen has also held residencies with the Minnesota Orchestra, the Charlotte Symphony, and the Colorado Symphony. Her career has been recognized with several awards including MIT’s McDermott Award, the Peabody Award, and the American Academy’s Arts and Letters Award.

The Cowboy Songs, composed by Larsen are three character songs. Two of the texts are drawn from cowboy/girl poetry: “Bucking Bronco” with a text by Belle Starr and “Billy the Kid” with an anonymous text. The third, “Lift Me Into Heaven Slowly,” featured in this recording, is the retitled “Sufi Sam Christian” of American poet Robert Creeley.



“Raspberry Island” is the third and last song of Raspberry Island Dreaming, a cycle about the Mississippi River commissioned for the inaugural concert of the Raspberry Island band shell (downtown St. Paul) on Sunday, September 8, 2002 and performed by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Kimberly Barber, mezzo-soprano. “Raspberry Island”—based on the poetry of Patricia Hampl—more specifically deals with a small territory of land below the Wabasha Street Bridge in St. Paul, Minnesota that lies on the Mississippi River, and the memories the poet has of driving there with her father.

Minneapolis-based pianist **George Maurer** is best known for his work as a performer, arranger, music director and composer. He has performed with Eric Clapton, shared the stage with Bruno Mars, and his symphonic arrangements have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra to the Boston Pops, under Keith Lockhart. George is the symphonic music-director and arranger for the Grammy and Tony-awarded original cast of Broadway’s Jersey Boys in “The Midtown Men.” Originally from Sun Prairie, Wisconsin he is a graduate of Saint John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota, with a BA in Music-Composition.

Regarding the two songs, the composer explains, that “Stations of the Heart was conceived for singer-actor Anne Michels (lead singer of the George Maurer Jazz Group and well-known on many stages in the Twin Cities, such as Guthrie, Ordway, Chanhassen Dinner Theater and Theater Latte Da). The premise: the varied stations and stages of love and relationship. Leaving the literary reasons for this to Jim Payne, the musical intent I had was to match varied styles of jazz and Great American Songbook-type styles to these songs (18 or more of them by now in the song-cycle, I believe); everything from Latin rhumba, tango, blues, bop, swing, torch ballads, and a few, such as If I Forget Your Face, that seemed to call out for more of an "art-song-tinged-with-color chords" approach.

...I just want to add that its a really special treat to have Carolyn choose these songs to be a part of this project, and to know that my notes and music are being played by my piano professor from my undergraduate years at the College of Saint Benedict/Saint John’s University, Ed Turley. And yet, I lay awake at night, contemplating and wondering if I’ve left an accidental accidental, or forgot to add some phrasing here and there, or (an even deeper delight) to wonder if I’m being cursed, softly, for some of the angles and colors I use in in my art. I sincerely hope I am!”

**Jim Payne** wrote “Too Cold to Snow” and “If I Forget Your Face” with composer George Maurer as part of their larger song cycle, Stations of the Heart, which has been presented, in various versions, by Theater Latte Da, as part of its Latte Dark cabaret series, and by Chanhassen Dinner Theaters, as part of its cabaret series. An alumnus of Nautilus Music Theater’s Composer/Librettist Studio, Jim has also written, with composer Robert Elhai, three one-act operas — Answered Prayers, Untold Lies, and Twisted Apples— based on the novel WINESBURG, OHIO, each of which has been presented at the Minnesota Fringe Festival by Nautilus. With composer Leslie Ball, Jim wrote the one-act opera Looking Glass Lake, which was presented as part of Nautilus’ Ivey Award-winning Sister Stories.

London-born pianist **Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell** received his musical training in England, France and at the Juilliard School and has performed throughout Europe and the United States, most notably at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Hall. Roderick’s multifaceted musical career has also included conducting choirs, orchestras and Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, playing chamber music, songs from all over the worlds, and collaborating with violinists to saxophonists, and all instruments in between. He is currently writing a book about how to develop more imagination, creativity and expression in the teaching and learning of music. More information can be found at [www.amademusic.com](http://www.amademusic.com).



Phipps-Kettlewell writes: “I wrote this song for Patricia Kent, inspired by her rich voice and committed artistry. My wife Marilène Phipps-Kettlewell wrote the poem “Invitation” and sent it to me by e-mail soon after we met in Concord, Massachusetts, amidst a gathering of Transcendentalists in the home town of Emerson. We were 1400 miles apart, and through the connection of technology, this poem written for me has always been a significant artistic and personal gesture, as a discreet offering to enter a relationship, which blossomed into marriage, now close to ten years. The richness of her imagery and language offers musical opportunities which I finally responded to eight years later with this song.

**Wynn-Anne Rossi** is a nationally acclaimed composer whose works have reached audiences throughout the United States, Europe, Iceland and Australia. Commissions include works sponsored by Minnesota Public Radio, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Composers Forum, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. She has over 100 publications, primarily for piano, which are widely distributed online and in music stores. Her repertoire also includes works for vocal and chamber groups, concert band and orchestra. She has been teaching composition residencies in Minnesota schools since 2003, inspiring hundreds of students to write their own music. Partnerships have included: the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the American Composers Forum, and the Cowles Center for Dance and Performing Arts. Rossi has also written two comprehensive series which encourage young pianists to compose. Active as a presenter, Wynn-Anne is known for her innovative lectures, workshops and masterclasses. More: [rossi-music.com](http://rossi-music.com), Wynn-Anne Rossi Music on Facebook. Regarding her song, she writes, “‘To Darkness’ was conceived as a part of a larger song cycle of Winter Passion Poems. It is a tribute to the heart of the creative process.”

Composer **David Evan Thomas** was born in Rochester, New York. He studied at Northwestern University, the Eastman School of Music and with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota. His work has been commissioned by the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and he has been honored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has written eleven song cycles. *Divine Images* is a collection rather than a cycle, based on poetry of the English visionary poet William Blake.

The composer writes, “William Blake (1757-1827) was a visionary poet and a gifted painter-printer with a humanist outlook. It’s useful to think of him as a Beethoven contemporary, and his work has the same iconoclastic quality and creative energy. The poems—multi-media art, really—were published in “illuminated” books; many of the texts are accompanied by images, and they are elaborated in fascinating detail. To see Blake’s work in all its varicolored splendor, visit the William Blake Archive ([www.blakearchive.org](http://www.blakearchive.org)).

Over twenty years, I composed a collection of Blake songs I call *Divine Images*. What appeals to me is Blake’s love of the human form and spirit, expressed with a directness that suggests to me unfussy musical language. “Cradle Song” celebrates the birth in 1995 of Madeline Clift, daughter of Mike and Karen Clift. Soprano Carol Eikum commissioned “laughing Song” the same year; the version recorded here was recomposed a decade later. *Divine Images* is dedicated to Patricia Kent, who has been a marvelous advocate and interpreter of my work. It is published by Classical Vocal Reprints ([www.classicalvocalrep.com](http://www.classicalvocalrep.com)).



## Performer Bios

**Carolyn Finley**, mezzo-soprano, is an active performer and adjudicator throughout the upper Midwest. She received two music degrees from the University of North Texas and a Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of Minnesota. A Texas native, Carolyn was a three-year member of the Houston Opera Studio where she performed leading and supporting roles in both the Studio and Main House productions for Houston Grand Opera. In the Midwest, she has toured with Nebraska Opera and Midwest Opera Theater, performed with the Plymouth Music Series, Duluth-Superior Orchestra, Rochester Symphony Orchestra, Thursday Musical, Schubert Club, Quite Light Opera Company and Minnesota Center Chorale. She performed as the mezzo-soprano soloist in *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, Stephen Paulus' holocaust oratorio, both locally and in Europe. Carolyn performs regularly with the CSB/SJU faculty chamber music ensemble *Pastiche* and has produced four art song CD's with her spouse, Edward Turley (piano).

**Patricia Kent**, Soprano, has performed as soprano soloist with many orchestras including Wooster (OH) Symphony, the Duluth Superior Symphony, the Rochester Symphony, the Metropolitan Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. She has also performed as soloist with many regional organizations, including the Minnesota Center Chorale, Macalester Festival Chorale, the Oratorio Society of Minnesota, the Minnesota Chorale and the Bach Society. Dr. Kent received her MA from Queens College and holds a DMA from the University of Minnesota, where she won the coveted Schussler Vocal Prize. Patricia is a featured artist on several recordings, including the Minnesota AIDS Quilt Songbook. She has also recorded *All in the Family: Song of Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn* with pianist Robert Koopmann and French songs in *La Vie Intérieure* with Roderick Phipps-Kettlewell. She also recorded songs of Henry Bryan Hays and Catalan, Brazilian and Spanish songs with Carolyn Finley and Edward Turley. Dr. Kent is on the faculty of the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University and Macalester College.

**Edward Turley**, piano, holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Northwestern University and both the master and doctoral degrees from the University of Colorado, Boulder. Active throughout the Upper Midwest as a recitalist, soloist, accompanist, clinician and adjudicator, he has performed with the Bloomington Symphony, St. Cloud Symphony, Heartland Symphony and in recital for Thursday Musical and the Schubert Club in Minneapolis. Dr. Turley has collaborated on seven CD recordings: *Music for Trumpet and Piano*, *Take Two*, and *The Invincible Cornet* with Dr. Dale White; *The Vocal Music of Bryan Beaumont Hayes*, *Under These Skies – British and American Art Song*, and *The Pleasures of Nature and Youth* with spouse Dr. Carolyn Finley (mezzo-soprano) and other colleagues; and *Due Cappuccini* with Dr. Richard Dirlam (saxophone). He was the recipient of the Sister Mary Grell Teacher of Distinction Award in 1996 and served as chair of the music department at CSB/SJU for sixteen years.

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