

**Rod Gilfry, *baritone***  
**with Peter Walsh, *pianist***  
**IN RECITAL**

PROGRAM

"The Housatonic at Stockbridge"	Charles Ives
"Two Little Flowers"	(1874 - 1954)
"The Greatest Man"	
"Serenity"	
"Charlie Rutlage"	
"Prayer"	Morten Lauridsen
"Sure On This Shining Night"	(b. 1943)
<i>Of Gods and Cats</i>	Jake Heggie
In the Beginning	(b. 1961)
Once Upon a Universe	
<i>Le bestiaire</i>	Francis Poulenc
Le dromadaire	(1899 - 1963)
La chèvre du Thibet	
La sauterelle	
Le dauphin	
L'écrevisse	
La carpe	
<i>Don Quichotte à Dulcinée</i>	Maurice Ravel
Chanson romanesque	(1875 - 1937)
Chanson épique	
Chanson à boire	
"Green"	Claude Debussy
	(1862 - 1918)
"Green" (Jazz)	arr. Gilfry/Aucoin/Walsh
"Chanson d'amour"	Gabriel Fauré
	(1845 - 1924)
"Love Song" (Jazz)	arr. Gilfry/Aucoin/Walsh
"Au bord de l'eau"	Gabriel Fauré
	(1845 - 1924)
"Au bord de l'eau" (Jazz)	arr. Gilfry/Aucoin/Walsh

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

*Notes by Arthur Smith*

Baritone Rod Gilfry and pianist Peter Walsh begin their program of American and French song with the iconoclastic composer Charles Ives (1874 - 1954). Although the line, "I contain multitudes" is from Walt Whitman, it could well be applied to this other American maverick. Ives created a distinctly American voice by together all manner of influences ranging from his father's band music, Beethoven, hymns and gospel tunes, music hall numbers, parlor ballads, cowboy poems, to a large helping of the 19th century New England philosophy Transcendentalism. In a recent Vocal Arts DC concert, we heard another thread in Ives' rich tapestry, his student work on texts from famous German lieder. In this performance we hear works from Ives' maturity, showcasing his range of modes, musical styles adventurousness, humor and most of all his capacious heart. "The Housatonic at Stockbridge" opens the set and is an adaptation of the last movement of Ives tone poem "Three Places in New England." Ives wrote of visiting the locale with his wife Harmony:

"We walked in the meadows along the river, and heard the distant singing from the church across the river. The mist had not entirely left the river bed, and the colors, the running water, the banks and elm trees were something that one would always remember."

As in so much Ives, the music that resulted from this memory embodies the sense of music overheard, or words almost being said: an ardent and melancholy richness. "Serenity" to a text by American poet John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 - 1892) is one of Ives' most remarkable songs. The text, which was original a hymnal poem, is here set over two alternating chords that lie uneasily under the restful words. At the very end, the hymn tune brushes in, and gentle harp-like arpeggios bring the work to a close.

American composer Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) is best known for his choral music, often working from spiritual or religious texts and writing pieces that are inward and meditative in feel. Lauridsen, a student of plainchant and Renaissance music, weaves simple musical materials together for sounds that has earned him the sobriquet modern mystic. "Prayer" sets a text by American poet Dana Gioia (b. 1950), a colleague of Lauridsen's at the University of Southern California, as is Rod Gilfry. In this piece, the poet remembers his firstborn son who died in infancy. The text of "Sure on this Shining Night" is by American poet, critic and memoirist, James Agee (1909-1953). Lauridsen's choral setting of Agee's poem is one of the all-time best-selling octavos of 20th century American music and this solo setting is something Lauridsen wrote expressly for Gilfry.

Both Rod Gilfry and Vocal Arts DC have had a long and fruitful collaboration with the next American composer, Jake Heggie (b. 1961). Known for his operas and song cycles, Heggie has established himself in the front rank of 21st century composers for the voice. VADC is pleased to say, "we knew him when..." As early as 1996, soprano Renée Fleming gave a ravishing performance of a Dickinson setting by the composer. More recently, Vocal Arts DC celebrated its 25th anniversary by commissioning "Iconic Legacies: First Ladies at the Smithsonian," which received its premiere in 2015 at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater in a performance by mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, with the composer at the piano. Heggie also serves as a member of VADC's Artistic Advisory Board. Rod Gilfry's association with Heggie includes his performance in the world premiere of *It's a Wonderful Life* (an opera on the Frank Capra film), in which he created the role of Mr. Gower/Mr. Potter. He is also slated to star in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of Heggie's acclaimed *Dead Man Walking* when performances resume. *Of Gods and Cats* dates from 1996 and sets texts by Gavin Geoffrey Dillard. The composer describes the two brief musical sketches as parodies of religious allegories. He finds a gentle and arch tone for a cat finding its purr, and an infantile God, who keeps refusing to clean up his room.

We move into the French portion of the program with the tender, piquant music of Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963). A prolific composer of *mélodie*, Poulenc created his first cycle, *Le bestiaire* to a text by Appolinaire in 1918, just after the composer's war service. The short poems are child-like in their simplicity, and the 20-year-old composer mined their gentleness and melancholy for brief works that bring a smile.

Cervantes' novel *Don Quixote* has inspired so many subsequent artworks that it's easy to imagine a complete performing arts season or museum exhibit devoted exclusively to works inspired by the knight-errant and his beloved sidekick Sancho Panza. This legacy runs the gamut from Broadway's *Man of La Mancha*, Massenet's operatic treatment, *Don Quichotte*, the iconic Petipa/Minkus ballet, and that Picasso print of the pair on horseback under a blazing sun with windmills ready for the tilting in the distance.

Ravel turned to the story at the invitation of filmmaker G. W. Pabst, who in 1933 commissioned several composers, including Ravel, to create songs for his upcoming film of the story. Accounts differ on why Pabst chose works by Jacques Ibert instead (his settings have been heard on previous Vocal Arts DC concerts), but the Ravel cycle, first performed by the great French singer Martial Singher, has gone on to become a favorite of baritones the world over and former teacher to Gilfry himself. They highlight Ravel's supreme ability as a musical colorist, always evoking and transforming Spanish rhythms and melody. His Don Q comes alive as a character, the music striking the right mood: indomitable hero, solemn knight, lovesick paramour, or raucous drunk by turns. It is a full picture, so much so that this vividness is perhaps what gave Pabst pause about using these songs on film.

For the final set on the program, we turn to works by Debussy and Fauré performed in both their original versions and jazz arrangements. Vocal Arts DC spoke with Rod Gilfry about his inspiration for these settings.

**VADC: What was appealing to you about doing jazz arrangements of French song?**

**RG:** Ever since I started learning French art songs as an undergrad, I was intrigued by what I thought *might* be some jazz elements in the music. Just for fun, and to satisfy my need for some irreverence, I would sing through the songs as if they were jazz tunes. It was very entertaining for me, and mildly entertaining for my colleagues who knew the songs. I never really seriously thought about arranging them as jazz pieces, primarily because I have no experience as a composer or arranger, or even a jazz singer! But a conversation with Matthew Aucoin in New York in 2017 spurred my desire to make it happen.

**VADC: How did you go about making the arrangements?**

**RG:** It turned out that what I perceived as jazz elements in the songs were the elements of Impressionism, exemplified in much of the music of Fauré, Debussy, Ravel and others. These elements are the pentatonic scale, the whole tone scale, and chords with added notes that are very similar to jazz chords. I conceived these arrangements almost entirely while running in Riverside Park. I was in New York City for Thomas Adès' *The Exterminating Angel* at the Met in 2018. I would go for runs in Riverside Park several times a week, and work on these arrangements in my head while running, sometimes stopping to make a (breathless) recording on my phone. I wrote very stilted English words for "Green" and "Love Song", which were vastly improved through collaboration with my brilliant daughter Erica. When I was with Matt Aucoin in Los Angeles sometime later, I needed to present my arrangements to him. I started by sending him MP3s of me singing the arrangements into my phone. To give him something more concrete to work with, I learned how to use Finale notation software and made some rudimentary charts. We met a few times in my studio at USC to work out the kinks, decide keys, and Matt was extremely helpful in rearranging parts that just didn't seem to work. We put together a jazz trio and presented them for the first time in May 2018 at an *After Hours* concert at the Los Angeles Opera, after a performance of *Rigoletto* that Matt conducted. The arrangements and piano solos were further developed through my collaboration with Peter Walsh, and the final product is what you hear on this recital.

**VADC: Anything else you'd like listeners to know?**

**RG:** I'm really proud of these arrangements, and I think they are particularly impactful when one hears the original songs and jazz versions back-to-back. They are very difficult to perform in this way, as the classical and jazz singing techniques are practically polar opposites! I hope you will enjoy them. I plan to do more arrangements like these, perhaps an entire album!

# TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

## Charles Ives: Various Songs

### **The Housatonic at Stockbridge**

from *Three Places in New England (Orchestral Set No. 1)*

Poem by Robert Underwood Johnson (1858 - 1937)

Contented river! In thy dreamy realm  
The cloudy willow and the plummy elm:  
Thou beautiful!  
From ev'ry dreamy hill  
what eye but wanders with thee at thy will,  
Contented river!  
And yet over-shy  
To mask thy beauty from the eager eye;  
Hast thou a thought to hide from field and town?  
In some deep current of the sunlit brown  
Ah! there's a restive ripple,  
And the swift red leaves  
September's firstlings faster drift;  
Wouldst thou away, dear stream?  
Come, whisper near!  
I also of much resting have a fear:  
Let me tomorrow thy companion be,  
By fall and shallow to the adventurous sea!

### **Two Little Flowers** from *114 Songs*

Poem by Harmony Twitchell (Mrs. Charles Ives) (1876 - 1969)

On sunny days in our backyard,  
two little flowers are seen,  
One dressed, at times, in brightest pink  
and one in green.  
The marigold is radiant,  
the rose passing fair;  
The violet is ever dear,  
the orchid, ever rare;  
There's loveliness<sup>1</sup> in wild flow'rs  
of field or wide savannah,  
But fairest, rarest of them all  
are Edith and Susanna.

### **The Greatest Man** from *114 Songs*

Text by Anne Collins (1885 - 1979)

My teacher said us boys should write  
about some great man, so I thought last night  
'n thought about heroes and men  
that had done great things,  
'n then I got to thinkin' 'bout my pa;  
he ain't a hero 'r anything but pshaw!

Say! He can ride the wildest hoss  
'n find minners near the moss  
down by the creek; 'n he can swim  
'n fish, we ketched five new lights, me 'n him!  
Dad's some hunter too - oh, my!  
Miss Molly Cottontail sure does fly  
when he tromps through the fields 'n brush!  
(Dad won't kill a lark 'r thrush.)  
Once when I was sick 'n though his hands were rough  
he rubbed the pain right out. "That's the stuff!"  
he said when I winked back the tears. He never cried  
but once 'n that was when my mother died.  
There're lots o' great men: George Washinton 'n Lee,  
but Dad's got 'em all beat holler, seems to me!

**Serenity** from *114 Songs and Seven Songs for Voice and Piano*

Excerpt from "The Brewing of Soma," a poem by John Greenleaf Whittier (1807 - 1892)

O, Sabbath rest of Galilee!  
O, calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee,  
the silence of eternity  
Interpreted by love.  
Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease:  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
and let our ordered lives confess,  
the beauty of thy peace.

**Charlie Rutlage**

Traditional, collected by John Avery Lomax (1867-1948)

Another good cowpuncher has gone to meet his fate,  
I hope he'll find a resting place, within the golden gate.  
Another place is vacant on the ranch of the X I T,  
'Twill be hard to find another that's liked as well as he.  
The first that died was Kid White, a man both tough and brave,  
While Charlie Rutlage makes the third to be sent to his grave,  
Caused by a cowhorse falling, while running after stock;  
'Twas on the spring round up, a place where death men mock,  
He went forward one morning on a circle through the hills,  
He was gay and full of glee, and free from earthly ills;  
But when it came to finish up the work on which he went,  
Nothing came back from him; his time on earth was spent.  
'Twas as he rode the round up, a XIT turned back to the herd;  
Poor Charlie shoved him in again, his cutting horse he spurred;  
Another turned; at that moment his horse the creature spied  
And turned and fell with him, beneath poor Charlie died,  
His relations in Texas his face never more will see,  
But I hope he'll meet his loved ones beyond in eternity,  
I hope he'll meet his parents, will meet them face to face,  
And that they'll grasp him by the right hand at the shining throne of grace.

**Morten Lauridsen: *Two Songs on American Poems***

**Prayer**

Poem by Dana Gioia (b. 1950)

Echo of the clocktower, footstep  
in the alleyway, sweep  
of the wind sifting the leaves.

Jeweller of the spiderweb, connoisseur  
of autumn's opulence, blade of lightning  
harvesting the sky.

Keeper of the small gate, choreographer  
of entrances and exits, midnight  
whisper traveling the wires.

Seducer, healer, deity or thief,  
I will see you soon enough—  
in the shadow of the rainfall,

in the brief violet darkening a sunset—  
but until then I pray watch over him  
as a mountain guards its covert ore  
and the harsh falcon its flightless young.

**Sure on this Shining Night**

Poem by James Agee (1909 - 1955)

Sure on this shining night  
Of starmade shadows round,  
Kindness must watch for me  
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.  
All is healed, all is health.  
High summer holds the earth.  
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night  
I weep for wonder  
Wandering far alone  
Of shadows on the stars

**Jake Heggie: *Of Gods and Cats***

Poems by Gavin Geoffrey Dillard (b. 1954)

**In the Beginning**

In the beginning was the Cat,  
and the Cat was without purr;  
the ethers stirred and there was milk,  
and the Cat saw that it was good.  
A hand stretched forth across the milk  
and scratched behind the Cat's ears ...  
and it felt good;

Then the firmament shook  
and there was produced a paper bag,  
and the Cat went forth, into the bag  
and, seeing that it was good ...

She fell asleep, purring.

**Once Upon a Universe**

Once, when God was a little boy, his Mother caught him  
breaking his toys, then gluing them back together again with  
prayers and incantations. Don't play with your creation, she  
admonished him, but he went right on building temples, only  
to destroy them with vast armies of antlike peoples,

creating new planets, then wiping them out with their own ignominious waste products. At the end of eternity his Mother shook her cosmic finger and insisted that he clean up his universe: *Or there'll be no bliss for you, young God!* He swept the entire mess into the nearest black hole and fell asleep sucking his Divine Thumb. Amen.

**Francis Poulenc: *Le bestiaire***

Text by Guillaume Apollinaire (1880 - 1918) | Translation by Ellen Goodnight

**Le dromadaire**

Avec ses quatre dromadaires  
Don Pedro d'Alfaroubeira  
Courut le monde et l'admira  
Il fit ce que je voudrais faire  
Si j'avais quatre dromadaires.

**The dromedary\***

With his four dromedaries  
Don Pedro d'Alfaroubeira  
Roams the world and admires her.  
He did what I would like to do  
If I had four dromedaries.

**La chèvre du Thibet**

Les poils de cette chèvre et même  
Ceux d'or pour qui prit tant de peine  
Jason ne valent rien au prix  
Des cheveux dont je suis épris

**The Tibetan goat**

The hair of this goat, and even  
The golden hairs that so pained  
Jason, are worth nothing to the price  
Of the head of hair I'm in love with.

**La sauterelle**

Voici la fine sauterelle  
La nourriture de Saint Jean.  
Puissent mes vers être comme elle  
Le régal des meilleures gens.

**The grasshopper**

Here is the delicate grasshopper,  
The nourishment of Saint John.  
May my verses be like her,  
A feast for the best of man.

**Le dauphin**

Dauphins, vous jouez dans la mer,  
Mais le flot est toujours amer.  
Parfois, ma joie éclate-t-elle?  
La vie est encore cruelle.

**The dolphin**

Dolphins, you play in the sea,  
But the tide is always bitter.  
At times, does my joy burst forth?  
Life is still cruel.

**L'écrevisse**

Incertitude, ô mes délices  
Vous et moi nous nous en allons  
Comme s'en vont les écrevisses,  
À reculons, à reculons.

**The crayfish**

Uncertainty, oh my delights  
You and I, we are going  
As the crayfish go,  
Backwards, backwards.

**La carpe**

Dans vos viviers, dans vos étangs,  
Carpes, que vous vivez longtemps!  
Est-ce que la mort vous oublie,  
Poissons de la mélancolie.

**The carp**

In your pools, in your ponds,  
Carp, how you live for a long time!  
Does death forget you,  
Fish of melancholy?

\* The dromedary (/ˈdrɒmədəri/), also called the Arabian camel, is a large even-toed ungulate, of the genus *Camelus*, with one hump on its back.

**Maurice Ravel: *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée***

Text by Paul Morand (1888 - 1979) | Translation by Ellen Goodnight

**Chanson romanesque**

Si vous me disiez que la terre  
À tant tourner vous offensa,  
Je lui dépêcherais Pança:  
Vous la verriez fixe et se taire.

Si vous me disiez que l'ennui  
Vous vient du ciel trop fleuri d'astres,  
Déchirant les divins cadastres,  
Je faucherais d'un coup la nuit.

Si vous me disiez que l'espace  
Ainsi vidé ne vous plaît point,  
Chevalier dieu, la lance au poing.  
J'étoilerais le vent qui passe.

Mais si vous disiez que mon sang  
Est plus à moi qu'à vous, ma Dame,  
Je blêmirais dessous le blâme  
Et je mourrais, vous bénissant.

Ô Dulcinée.

**Chanson épique**

Bon Saint Michel qui me donnez loisir  
De voir ma Dame et de l'entendre,  
Bon Saint Michel qui me daignez choisir  
Pour lui complaire et la défendre,  
Bon Saint Michel veuillez descendre  
Avec Saint Georges sur l'autel  
De la Madone au bleu mantel.

D'un rayon du ciel bénissez ma lame  
Et son égale en pureté  
Et son égale en piété  
Comme en pudeur et chasteté:  
Ma Dame.

(Ô grands Saint Georges et Saint Michel)  
L'ange qui veille sur ma veille,  
Ma douce Dame si pareille  
À Vous, Madone au bleu mantel!  
Amen.

**Romantic song**

Were you to tell that the earth,  
Turning so much, offended you,  
I would dispatch Panza to her:  
You would see her motionless and fall silent.

Were you to tell me that boredom  
Comes to you from the sky, studded with stars,  
Tearing apart the divine order,  
I would suddenly slice the night.

Were you to tell me that space,  
So emptied, does not please you,  
As a god-like knight, lance in hand,  
I would scatter the stars in the passing wind.

But were you to tell me that my blood  
Is more mine, than your own, my Lady,  
I would pale beneath the blame,  
And would die, blessing you.

O Dulcinea.

**Epic Song**

Good Saint Michael who gives me leave  
To behold and hear my Lady,  
Good Saint Michael who deigns to choose me  
To please her and defend her,  
Good Saint Michael, I beg you, descend,  
With Saint George to the altar  
Of the Madonna robed in blue.

With a ray of heaven bless my blade  
And its equal in purity  
And its equal in piety  
As in modesty and chastity:  
My Lady.

(O great Saint George and great Saint Michael)  
The angel who watches over my vigil,  
My sweet Lady, so alike  
To You, Madonna robed in blue!  
Amen.



### Chanson à boire

Foin du bâtard, illustre Dame,  
Qui pour me perdre à vos doux yeux  
Dit que l'amour et le vin vieux  
Mettent en deuil mon cœur, mon âme!

Je bois  
À la joie!  
La joie est le seul but  
Où je vais droit... lorsque j'ai bu!

Foin du jaloux, brune maîtresse,  
Qui geint, qui pleure et fait serment  
D'être toujours ce pâle amant  
Qui met de l'eau dans son ivresse!

Je bois  
À la joie!  
La joie est le seul but  
Où je vais droit...  
Lorsque j'ai bu!

### Drinking song

Away with the bastard, illustrious Lady,  
Who, to discredit me in your sweet eyes,  
Says that love and old wine  
Place in mourning my heart, my soul!

I drink  
To joy!  
Joy is the only goal  
To which I go straight... when I'm... drunk!

Away with the jealous one, dark-haired mistress,  
Who moans, who cries and vows  
To be forever that pallid lover  
Who waters down his drunkenness!

I drink  
To joy!  
Joy is the only goal  
To which I go straight...  
When I'm... drunk!

### Claude Debussy: "Green"

Text by Paul Verlaine (1844 - 1896) | Translation by Ellen Goodnight

#### Green

Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des  
branches  
Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que pour vous.  
Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches  
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble présent soit doux.

J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée  
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à mon front.

Souffrez que ma fatigue à vos pieds reposée  
Rêve des chers instants qui la délasseront.

Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête  
Toute sonore encore de vos derniers baisers;  
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête,  
Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez.

#### Green

Here are fruits, flowers, leaves and branches  
And here too is my heart that beats only for you.  
Do not tear it with your two white hands  
And may in your beautiful eyes, the humble gift be  
sweet.

I arrive still covered in dew  
Which the morning wind comes to freeze on my  
brow.

Suffer my weariness, at your feet I may rest  
Dreaming of dear moments that will soothe it.

On your young breast let me roll my head  
Still ringing with your last kisses;  
Let me calm down from love's good tempest,  
And that I sleep a while, since you rest.

## Gabriel Fauré: Two songs

### Chanson d'amour

Text by Armand Silvestre (1837 - 1901)

J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ton front,  
Ô ma rebelle, ô ma farouche,  
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ta bouche  
Où mes baisers s'épuiseront.

J'aime ta voix, j'aime l'étrange  
Grâce de tout ce que tu dis,  
Ô ma rebelle, ô mon cher ange,  
Mon enfer et mon paradis!

J'aime tout ce qui te fait belle,  
De tes pieds jusqu'à tes cheveux,  
Ô toi vers qui montent mes vœux,  
Ô ma farouche, ô ma rebelle!

### Au bord de l'eau

Text by Sully Prudhomme (1839 - 1907)

S'asseoir tous deux au bord d'un flot qui passe,  
Le voir passer;  
Tous deux, s'il glisse un nuage en l'espace,  
Le voir glisser;  
À l'horizon, s'il fume un toit de chaume,  
Le voir fumer;  
Aux alentours si quelque fleur embaume,  
S'en embaumer;  
Entendre au pied du saule où l'eau murmure

L'eau murmurer;  
Ne pas sentir, tant que ce rêve dure,  
Le temps durer;  
Mais n'apportant de passion profonde  
Qu'à s'adorer,  
Sans nul souci des querelles du monde,  
Les ignorer;  
Et seuls, tous deux devant tout ce qui lasse,  
Sans se lasser,  
Sentir l'amour, devant tout ce qui passe,  
Ne point passer!

### Love song

Translation by Ellen Goodnight

I love your eyes, I love your brow,  
O my rebel, O my fierce one,  
I love your eyes, I love your mouth  
Where my kisses shall wear themselves out.

I love your voice, I love the strange  
Grace of all you say,  
O my rebel, O my dear angel,  
My inferno and my paradise.

I love all that makes you beautiful,  
From your feet to your hair,  
O you to whom my vows go,  
O my fierce one, O my rebel.

### By the water's edge

Translation by Ellen Goodnight

To sit together by the edge of a passing stream,  
To watch it pass by;  
Together, if a cloud glides by in space,  
To watch it glide;  
On the horizon, if smoke rises from thatch,  
To watch it smoke;  
If nearby a flower is fragrant,  
To savor its fragrance;  
To hear at the foot of the willow, where water  
murmurs,

To the murmuring water;  
Not to feel, for as long as this dream lasts,  
The time lasts;  
But bringing no deep passion,  
Except to adore each other,  
With no concern for the quarrels of the world,  
To ignore them;  
And alone together, seeing all that tires,  
Without tiring of each other,  
To feel that love, in the face of all that passes,  
Shall never pass!

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



Baritone **Rod Gilfry** was born and raised in Southern California. He earned degrees from California State University Fullerton, and the University of Southern California. From 1987 to 1989 he was a member of the Frankfurt Opera ensemble, and from 1989 to 1994 he was a member of the Zurich Opera ensemble.

The two-time Grammy nominee, singer and actor has performed in all the world's music capitals and appears on over 30 recordings. He is acclaimed world-wide in opera, musicals, recitals and cabaret. An important part of his 75-role repertoire are the 12 leading roles he has created in new operas. Recent performances include the Los Angeles Opera productions of David Lang's solo opera *the loser* and Matthew Aucoin's *Crossing*, and Jake Heggie's *It's a Wonderful Life* at the San

Francisco Opera. He was recently Claudius in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* at the Glyndebourne and Adelaide Festivals, and he appeared in the Metropolitan Opera production of Thomas Adès' *The Exterminating Angel*.

Upcoming appearances include concerts with the Cincinnati Symphony and New York Philharmonic, and the role of Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* at the Santa Fe Opera. This summer he will begin a tour with soprano Renée Fleming, premiering *The Brightness of Light* by Kevin Puts. The tour will include the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood, the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center, and the Colorado Symphony in Denver. Other future engagements include Matthew Aucoin's *Euridice* at the Los Angeles Opera, Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* at the Metropolitan Opera, and Brett Dean's *Hamlet* with the Dutch Radio Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera. Mr. Gilfry is in his 10th year as a Professor of Vocal Arts at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music in Los Angeles.



**Peter Walsh** has established a reputation as a dynamic pianist of great versatility, equally at home as a recitalist, orchestral keyboardist, and assistant to conductors at opera theaters across the country. Possessing a strong foundation in the performance of solo repertoire, Walsh has been hailed by Opera News for his “especially solid and prominent playing” and “warmly expressive accompaniment.” He has served on the music staffs of Opera Omaha, Utah Opera, Central City Opera, Wolf Trap Opera, San Diego Opera, Houston Grand Opera, and LA Opera, and has assisted renowned conductors James Conlon, Gustavo Dudamel, Grant Gershon, Jane Glover, Eun Sun Kim, Speranza Scappucci, Robert Spano, and Patrick Summers, amongst others.

Walsh is a graduate of the Houston Grand Opera Studio (2016-2018) and the LA Opera Domingo-Colburn-Stein Young Artist Program (2014-2016). While at the Houston Grand Opera, Walsh was consistently responsible for playing the company's most ambitious programming, including productions of *Nixon in China*, *Götterdämmerung*, and *Elektra*. While at LA Opera from 2014-2016 he served on the music staff for numerous company productions. Significant performance credits at LA Opera include playing fortepiano for Barrie Kosky's *The Magic Flute*, accompanying the recitatives for Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and playing orchestral piano in concert with Renée Fleming and Andrea Bocelli.

Walsh holds bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in piano performance from the USC Thornton School of Music, where he studied with Lucinda Carver and Kevin Fitz-Gerald. He completed his doctorate with academic distinction, pursuing minor fields in music theory and analysis, keyboard collaborative arts, and jazz studies. From 2007-2012 Walsh was an assistant lecturer in keyboard studies for the USC Thornton School of Music. He has held additional faculty appointments at El Camino College (2011-2014), the University of La Verne (2012-2013), and the California State Summer School for the Arts (2013, 2014, & 2017).



## ABOUT VOCAL ARTS DC

The mission of VADC, now celebrating our 30th anniversary season, is to nurture and promote the classical voice recital genre and to introduce new audiences to the richness, cultural diversity, and beauty of the classical song literature. VADC is the only organization anywhere in North America, and one of the few in the world, which presents a full concert season solely devoted to classical voice recitals. As such, it has made Washington DC a magnet for the world's greatest stars of the opera and concert stage. VADC presents a season of six to eight recitals, usually in the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, occasionally in other venues. These generally feature world-renowned singers, although VADC also attempts to introduce to its audience emerging artists whom it considers to be on the threshold of international stardom. Beginning with our 25th anniversary season of 2015-2016, Vocal Arts DC made a firm commitment to broaden the contemporary library of solo vocal works by commissioning new works from living composers. Toward that goal, we have presented world premieres of new works by Jake Heggie, Gregory Spears, and Lowell Liebermann, and will offer first hearings of new pieces by Caroline Shaw and Tyshawn Sorey during our 2020-2021 season. In addition to its main stage performances, VADC operates an in-school educational program for secondary and high school students in collaboration with the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC.

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Recorded by Arts Laureate  
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Filmed in the Pompeian Room at the Doheny Mansion in Los Angeles, CA on January 9, 2021

Edited by Christian Amonson, Neil Brown, and Matt Hagestuen

Piano introduction by Natalia Katjukova  
 Additional branding by Predistorial.tv  
 Special thank you to Unreel LOCATIONS

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*Vocal Arts DC is the grateful recipient of major grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation and appreciates generous support from the Howard and Sarah D. Solomon Foundation, The Dallas Morse Coors Foundation, and The Nancy Peery Marriott Foundation*