

New York
Festival of Song



Ports of Call

Juilliard

The Juilliard School
and
New York Festival of Song
present

Ports of Call

Chea Young Kang and Deborah Love, Sopranos
Maggie Renéé and Jasmin White, Mezzo-Sopranos
Cesar Andres Parreño and Santiago Pizarro, Tenors
Kyle Miller and Jarrett Porter, Baritones
Joseph Parrish, Bass-Baritone

Steven Blier, Pianist, Arranger, and Artistic Director of NYFOS
Mary Birnbaum, Stage Director
Shawn Chang, Assistant Pianist
Jonathan Estabrooks, Video Producer

INTRO

BOB TELSON
(b. 1949)

"Calling You" from *Bagdad Café*
Joseph Parrish

BRAZIL

ERNESTO JÚLIO
DE NAZARETH
(1863-1934)

Nenê
Chea Young Kang

SPAIN

JESÚS GURIDI
(1886-1961)

"Mañanita de San Juan" from *Seis canciones castellanas*
Deborah Love

FRANCE

KURT WEILL
(1900-50)

J'attends un navire
Jasmin White

AUSTRIA/CHINA

FRANZ LEHÁR
(1870-1948)

"Immer nur lächeln" from *Das Land des Lächelns*
Cesar Andres Parreño

HOLLAND

JACQUES BREL
(1929-78)

Amsterdam
Kyle Miller

Program continues

SWEDEN

GUSTAF NORDQVIST
(1886-1949)

Till havs
Santiago Pizarro

ISRAEL

CHAIM BARKANI
(1923-2001)

Al telchi basadeh
Maggie Renéé

KOREA

TRADITIONAL

The Boat Song
Chea Young Kang

USA (NYC)

NED ROREM
(b. 1923)

The Lordly Hudson
Jarrett Porter

HAROLD ARLEN
(1905-86)

Let's Take a Walk Around the Block
Ensemble

Juilliard's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts was established in 2010 by the generous support of Ellen and James S. Marcus.

Juilliard's livestream technology is made possible by a gift in honor of President Emeritus Joseph W. Polisi, building on his legacy of broadening Juilliard's global reach.

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About the Program by Steven Blier

When it was time to settle on the theme for this year's NYFOS@Juilliard concert, we were still entertaining the hope that we'd be performing in the Sharp Theater, either for a live audience or an army of cameras. But we had to be ready for Plan B: a series of music videos of the type we'd all been producing since the pandemic started. Searching for a flexible, resilient theme that could thrive in either medium, I remembered a NYFOS show, *Ports of Call*, that would answer our needs. The program, with a varied playlist, had a distinguished pedigree of four previous productions. It was ready for its fifth iteration.

The premise of the concert is simple: a trip around the world through song. At every stop, we meet someone in transit—a wanderer, a sailor, a pilgrim, a traveler, someone on the prowl for love or enlightenment. The theme was especially apt this winter when several of our cast members were not in New York and others had only recently arrived back to school after long quarantines overseas. All of us were fantasizing about a world where we could roam without fear.

Director Mary Birnbaum and I had two goals in mind: to take advantage of the cast's diversity and introduce the singers to new repertoire. Chea Young Kang offered five gorgeous Korean songs to choose from and filmed one of them from a temple in Seoul; Joseph Parrish bowled us over with his jazz piano chops accompanying himself in "Calling You" from the movie *Bagdad Café*; Maggie René wrapped her mezzo voice around an iconic Israeli song, "At telchi basadeh," with the authenticity of a born-and-bred sabra chanteuse; and Jarrett Porter, new to our city, brought a special reverence to Ned Rorem's hymn to New York, "The Lordly Hudson." They were all in their wheelhouse.

Others entered uncharted waters. My original intention was to have our two tenors, Santiago Pizarro and César Parreño, sing songs from their native Peru and Ecuador. But I feared that would have becalmed the voyage in South America for too long. Instead, I took them into new territory: for Santiago, his first Swedish song, the classic barn-burner "Till Havs" by one-hit wonder Gustav Nordqvist; for César, a rare aria from Lehár's *The Land of Smiles*, about an alienated Chinese prince on a state visit to Vienna. One man finds his true nature facing the turbulence of sea voyages while the other stoically weathers the isolation of being an outsider in a foreign culture. Both proved to be superb showcases for their voices.

When I was a teenager, the Belgian singer-songwriter Jacques Brel was famous enough to inspire a long-running off-Broadway musical revue, *Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. By now, when Brel is no longer alive and well and living anywhere, few of my students have heard of him. But to my surprise, Kyle Miller turned out to be a Brel devotee—though he'd never sung his music. We were both drawn to one of Brel's love songs, "Ne me quitte pas," but we realized that "Amsterdam" was more appropriate to the theme—after all, it is about an actual port of call.

“Amsterdam” is a fierce piece of music, relentless vocal challenge, and difficult song to encompass on just a piano. The music moves in a slow accelerando and crescendo from beginning to end, which is daunting to coordinate when you can’t record in the same room. Somehow Kyle and I pulled off this miracle of ensemble, attacking Brel’s roaring *chanson* like a pair of lions.

If Jacques Brel was a teenage passion of mine, Kurt Weill informed my 20s and 30s, and songs from Spain and Latin America have become the obsession of my recent years. Choosing a Weill song was easy: “J’attends un navire” from *Marie Galante* checked all the boxes. The character has been kidnapped to Panama but longs to travel home to Bordeaux—a double travel theme. And Weill himself was in transit when he wrote it: Forced to flee Nazi Germany, he took refuge in Paris before becoming a leading light on Broadway. The song needs a colloquial lightness as well as serious vocal chops for the strenuous last page. It was perfect for mezzo-soprano Jasmin White, a Verdi singer in the making with a background in jazz.

“Nenê,” a fixture in every version of *Ports of Call*, has music by an early composing icon from Brazil, Ernesto Nazareth. Combining the grace of Chopin with the sexy swing of local dance rhythms, he laid the foundation for Brazilian jazz. Some of his piano pieces—like “Nenê”—also have lyrics, making them irresistible, if somewhat rangy, songs. This was Chea Young Kang’s first foray into Portuguese, which she mastered from her apartment in South Korea. Her language coach, Zeuler Lima, was in St. Louis. Score one for FaceTime.

Basque composer Jesús Guridi provides our stopover in Spain: “Mañanita de San Juan” from his *Six Castilian Songs*. The narrator doesn’t travel very far in this piece—just a saunter from her house down to the beach at the very beginning of summer. There the delights of music and love await her. Guridi’s arching melody shows soprano Deborah Love’s opulent voice to good advantage.

We end with a reality check: “Let’s Take a Walk Around the Block” by Harold Arlen and Ira Gershwin. The song was written during the Great Depression, and the narrators don’t have any money for travel—the best they can manage is a trip around the block as they fantasize about all the foreign places they want to visit. The song may be 87 years old, but it perfectly sums up our pent-up Covid-era desires—“I’ll sit on your lap—all over the map!” The day will come when we can gather together in one room to belt out this song unmasked.

Maybe we can even give one another a hug when it’s done. May that day come soon.

About the Artists (as of May 26, 2021)

Mary Birnbaum

In 2019, Mary Birnbaum's new production of *La bohème* opened the Santa Fe Opera's summer season. Her passion for interdisciplinary art paired with her theater training has informed the variety of projects she has undertaken. Her work in opera includes reinventions of classic works by composers from Purcell and Mozart to world premieres by Chris Cerrone/Stephanie Fleischmann, Rene Orth/Mark Campbell, Kristen Kuster/Megan Levad, and others. She has built new productions for Montclair Peak Performances, Juilliard, Opera Philadelphia, Château de Versailles, Teatro Nacional in Costa Rica, Compañía Lírica in Guatemala, National Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan, Oregon Symphony, Pacific Coast Symphony, Virginia Arts Festival, Ojai Festival, IVAI in Tel Aviv, Lyric Opera of Kansas City, Opera Kentucky, Opera Columbus, CalPerformances Berkeley, Bard Summerscape, Boston Baroque, and New World Symphony. Upcoming operas are *Das Rheingold* for Virginia Opera and *In a Grove* (Cerrone/Fleischmann) at Pittsburgh Opera.



Steven Blier

Steven Blier is the artistic director of the New York Festival of Song (NYFOS), which he cofounded in 1988 with fellow pianist Michael Barrett. Since NYFOS' inception, he has programmed, performed, translated, and annotated more than 155 vocal recitals with repertoire spanning art song from Schubert to Szymanowski and popular song from early vaudeville to Lennon-McCartney. NYFOS has also made in-depth explorations of music from Spain, Latin America, Scandinavia, and Russia. *New York* magazine gave NYFOS an award for best classical programming, *Opera News* proclaimed Blier "the coolest dude in town," and in 2014, *Musical America* included him as one of 30 top industry professionals in the feature article, "Profiles in Courage." Blier enjoys an eminent career as an accompanist and vocal coach. His recital partners have included Renée Fleming, Cecilia Bartoli, Samuel Ramey, Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, and Jessye Norman in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to La Scala. He serves on the faculty of Juilliard and mentors young recitalists at residency programs that include Caramoor, the Wolf Trap Opera Company, Steans Institute at Ravinia, Santa Fe Opera, and San Francisco Opera Center. Blier's extensive discography includes the premiere recording of Leonard Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*, which won a Grammy Award; and the premiere recording of *Bastianello* (John Musto) and *Lucrezia* (William Bolcom), one-act comic operas set to librettos by Mark Campbell. His latest release is *Canción amorosa*, a CD of Spanish songs with soprano Corinne Winters. Blier's writings on opera have been featured in *Opera News* and the *Yale Review*. A native New Yorker, he received a bachelor's with honors in English literature at Yale University, where he studied piano with Alexander Farkas. He completed his musical studies in New York with Martin Isepp and Paul Jacobs.





Shawn Chang

Taiwanese-Canadian pianist and composer Shawn Chang has created an international career of distinction. His compositions are marked by harmonic shifts and a rhythmic drive that evoke both the urban and country landscapes of his home state of New York. As a collaborative pianist, Chang has given recitals throughout the U.S., Canada, and his birthplace of Taipei, Taiwan, including Weill Recital Hall, the United Palace Theatre, Aspen's Benedict Music Tent, Nicholas Roerich Museum, Bohemian National Hall, June Havoc Theatre, and Taipei National Music Hall. He was one of the 2020 Schwab rising stars of the Caramoor Music Festival and was one of the pianists of Carnegie Hall's *SongStudio*, led by Renée Fleming. In 2019, he appeared with the Orchestra of the Bronx for Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, and in 2018, he was featured with the orchestra in Bach's Keyboard Concerto. Chang was the music director and arranger for Aya Aziz's show *Eh Dah? Questions for my Father* (2016), which was a New York Musical Festival award winner. Upcoming appearances include a chamber music concert at the Haitian Music Society in Montreal. As a répétiteur, Chang has worked for the Bronx Opera, Garden State Opera, and OperaRox. Chang holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied with Benjamin Pasternack, and he is pursuing his master's in collaborative piano at Juilliard under Lydia Brown.



Chea Young Kang

Soprano Chea Young Kang is an undergraduate student at Juilliard from Deokso, South Korea, in the studio of Marlena Malas. She has studied voice since age 12 and studied with soprano Young Mi Kim for four years in Korea. She performed in NYFOS@Juilliard's *Cubans in Paris* in January 2020, and in the 2020 online summer program of the Chautauqua Institution, she sang the role of Romilda in *Serse*.



Deborah Love

American soprano Deborah Love, who hails from Harlem, is in the Graduate Diploma program at Juilliard, studying with Elizabeth Bishop. In 2017, she made her international debut as First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* under conductor Olaf Storbeck from the National Opera of Weimar and was the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem* with Queens College Choral Society. She made her American debut as La Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro* in 2018 and sang Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Aaron Copland School of Music in 2019. Last year, Love sang the role of Constance Fletcher in *The Mother of Us All* with the New York Philharmonic at the Met Museum. She is a graduate of the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens, where she earned her master's in 2019, and she studied with baritone Sidney Outlaw. She graduated with a BA in Italian and a minor in music from Saint John's University in 2013.

- Loretta Lewis Award in Voice
- New York Community Trust Schoen-Rene Scholarship

Kyle Miller

Originally from San Francisco, baritone Kyle Miller is continuing his graduate studies at Juilliard studying with Robert White. Miller recently performed at Carnegie Hall as the baritone soloist in Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and at Alice Tully Hall in Stravinsky's *Pribaoutki*. His prior operatic roles include Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Moralès in *Carmen* with the Chautauqua Institution, and Marquis de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* and Conte Almaviva in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where he received his bachelor's. He covered the role of Marcello in Juilliard's production of *La bohème*, which was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This summer, he is returning to the Opera Theatre of St. Louis Young Artist Program as a Gerdine Young Artist.



• Toulmin Scholar

Cesar Andres Parreño

A native of Guayaquil, Ecuador, tenor Cesar Andres Parreño started his voice studies with Ecuador's most renowned opera singer, soprano Beatriz Parra at Colegio de Artes Maria Callas. Soon after, he won first place in the International Classical Music Competition for Young Talents in Cuenca, Ecuador. That same year, he was a soloist with the University of Cuenca Orchestra and Guayaquil's Symphonic Orchestra. In 2019, Parreño performed the role of Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, at the Chautauqua Institute. Last year, he made his Peter Jay Sharp Theater debut in NYFOS@Juilliard's *Cubans in Paris*. This year, Parreño will cover Nemorino in Juilliard's production of *L'elisir d'amore*. Parreño is in his fourth year studying for his bachelor's under the tutelage of Robert White at Juilliard, where he is the first Ecuadorian to attend. He plans to begin his master's studies at Juilliard in Darrell Babidge's studio.

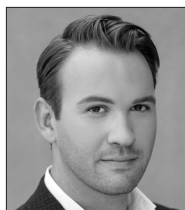


• Steven Blier
Scholarship

Santiago Pizarro

Peruvian tenor Santiago Pizarro won first prize in the 2017 National Classical Singing Competition of Filarmonía Radio, Peru. A creative, outgoing, and passionate artist and advocate for intercultural communication, he has portrayed roles in diverse styles, from Nerone in *l'Incoronazione di Poppea* to Lysander in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Pizarro has performed at venues such as Opera Holland Park in London, the Gran Teatro Nacional in Lima, and the Opéra Royal in Versailles. His commitment to innovation has led him to commission and premiere several original works. This summer, he will be performing the role of Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte* at the Lyric Opera Studio in Weimar, Germany. He is a Master of Music student at Juilliard, studying with William Burden.





- Jack Bakal
Classical Artist
Scholarship

Jarrett Porter

Baritone Jarrett Porter is a first-year Artist Diploma in Opera Studies candidate at Juilliard. Porter has been a member of the young artist programs at the Santa Fe Opera, Arizona Opera, and Glimmerglass Festival, and is the 2019 winner of the Sullivan Foundation Awards. As an avid art song recitalist, Porter has been a fellow at the Ravinia Festival's Steans Music Institute and has performed with Graham Johnson and Thomas Allen for NPR. Porter will make his principal debut with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis as Dr. Oliver Sacks in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Awakenings*, based on Sacks' memoir. He studies at Juilliard with Darrell Babidge.



- Toulmin Scholar

Joseph Parrish

Bass-Baritone Joseph Parrish, a native of Baltimore, is a master's student at Juilliard, where he studies with Darrell Babidge. Parrish has performed as Claudio in the Asheville Lyric Opera's production of *Béatrice et Bénédict* and developed the role of Ensemble #4 in the premier of Davenport Richards' *Blind Injustice* with the Cincinnati Opera. This past year, Parrish gave a recital at St. Boniface Church in Brooklyn and participated in a Russian Liederabend, coached by Gina Levinson, and Juilliard's Songfest with Brian Zeger. Parrish sang the role of Il Sacerdote di Minerva in Juilliard's production of *Teseo* directed by Stephen Wadsworth and will make his Dulcamara debut in *L'elisir d'amore* directed by John Giampietro.



Maggie Reneé

Maggie Reneé, a mezzo-soprano from Los Angeles, is an honors graduate of Juilliard, where she is pursuing her master's degree under Elizabeth Bishop. Last year, she sang Goffredo in *Rinaldo* at Juilliard, Carmen in *La Tragédie de Carmen* with City Lyric Opera, toured Europe with Juilliard's *Dido and Aeneas*, and made solo debuts with the Reno Philharmonic and the California Philharmonic Orchestra at Disney Hall. Maggie Reneé also sang Dorabella in *Così fan tutte* and Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro* as an apprentice artist at Teatro Nuovo (formerly Bel Canto at Caramoor). In 2017, she made her European debut as Cherubino in *Le nozze di Figaro* in Germany. In addition to opera, Maggie Reneé sings a variety of repertoire in different genres in more than 10 languages.

Jasmin White

Jasmin White is a mezzo-soprano from Grand Ronde, Oregon who studies with Elizabeth Bishop while pursuing her Artist Diploma at Juilliard. White earned her bachelor's from the University of Southern California and her master's from Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. White's prior training programs include Aspen Music Festival and School, OperaWorks, and SongFest. In 2017, she sang the role of Strawberry Woman in *Porgy and Bess* and covered Atalanta in *Xerxes* at the Glimmerglass Festival. White made her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in 2019 as a soloist and first soprano in the ensemble of *Porgy and Bess*. She was to perform in the world premiere of Tobias Picker's *Awakenings* at Opera Theater of Saint Louis in 2020, but that was interrupted by the pandemic.



• Edith A. Sagul
Scholarship

New York Festival of Song

Now in its 33rd season, New York Festival of Song (NYFOS) is dedicated to creating intimate song concerts of great beauty and originality. Weaving music, poetry, history, and humor into evenings of compelling theater, NYFOS fosters community among artists and audiences. Each program entertains and educates in equal measure. Founded by pianists Michael Barrett and Steven Blier in 1988, NYFOS continues to produce its series of thematic song programs, drawing together rarely heard songs of all kinds, overriding traditional distinctions between musical genres, exploring the character and language of other cultures as well as the personal voices of song composers and lyricists. Since its founding, NYFOS has particularly celebrated American song. Among many highlights is the double bill of one-act comic operas, *Bastianello* and *Lucrezia*, by John Musto and William Bolcom, both with libretti by Mark Campbell, commissioned and premiered by NYFOS in 2008 and recorded on Bridge Records; also on Bridge was the 2008 release of *Spanish Love Songs* with Joseph Kaiser and the late Lorraine Hunt Lieberson. NYFOS has produced five recordings on the Koch label, including a Grammy-winning disc of Bernstein's *Arias and Barcarolles*; the Grammy-nominated recording of Ned Rorem's *Evidence of Things Not Seen* (also a NYFOS commission) was released on New World Records. In 2014, *Canción Amorosa*, a CD of Spanish song—Basque, Catalan, Castilian, and Sephardic—was released on the GPR label, with soprano Corinne Winters accompanied by Steven Blier. In 2010, NYFOS debuted *NYFOS Next*, a mini-series for new songs, hosted by guest composers in intimate venues, including SubCulture, OPERA America's National Opera Center, National Sawdust, and the DiMenna Center for Classical Music. NYFOS is passionate about nurturing the artistry and careers of young singers, and has developed training residencies around the country, including with Juilliard's Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts (now in its 16th year); Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts (its 13th year); San Francisco Opera Center (more than 21 years); Glimmerglass Opera (2008–10); and its newest residency, NYFOS@North Fork in Orient, New York. NYFOS' concert series, touring programs, radio broadcasts, recordings, and educational activities continue to spark new interest in the creative possibilities of the song program and have inspired the creation of thematic vocal series around the world.

Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts

One of America’s most prestigious programs for educating singers, The Juilliard School’s Ellen and James S. Marcus Institute for Vocal Arts offers young artists programs tailored to their talents and needs. From bachelor and master of music degrees to an advanced Artist Diploma in Opera Studies, Juilliard provides frequent performance opportunities featuring singers in its own recital halls, on Lincoln Center’s stages, and around New York City. Juilliard Opera has presented numerous premieres of new operas as well as works from the standard repertoire.

Juilliard graduates may be heard in opera houses and concert halls throughout the world; diverse alumni artists include well-known performers such as Leontyne Price, Renée Fleming, Risë Stevens, Tatiana Troyanos, Simon Estes, and Shirley Verrett. Recent alumni include Isabel Leonard, Susanna Phillips, Paul Appleby, Erin Morley, Sasha Cooke, and Julia Bullock.

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