

# Before Body Meets Earth

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 19TH, 2021 @ 7 PM

THE ETHICAL SOCIETY

1906 S. RITTENHOUSE SQUARE,

PHILADELPHIA, PA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 2021 @ 3 PM

ST. DAVID'S EPISCOPAL

763 S. VALLEY FORGE RD.,

WAYNE, PA

Aural  
COMPASS  
PROJECTS



CODYRAY CAHO, BARITONE

CHELSEA FINGAL DESOUZA, SOPRANO

MICHAEL LEWIS, PIANO

## A message from ACP's Founding Artistic Director

Welcome to Before Body Meets Earth! This is our first event for the greater Philadelphia area, and we are so thankful you are joining us! At the onset of quarantine last year, I honestly wasn't sure what was going to happen to Aural Compass Projects. Only nine months into our existence, reimagining this organization became essential to keep our mission alive.

Knowing we wanted to cultivate morally driven artistic work gave us ground for what became an enormously rewarding second season! The connections we were able to establish and cultivate resulted in a live talk show hosted by Elliott Paige, an extensive docuseries featuring the works and lives of African American art song composers, an operatic short and partnership with LA Opera and mezzo-soprano, Raehann Bryce-Davis, a celebration of Asian composers with mezzo-soprano, Fleur Barron and pianist, Myra Huang, and our first annual Emerging Composer's Competition and Concert!

Tonight's event, Before Body Meets Earth, blends the formal classical recital with theatrical storytelling to explore ideas of value as seen through the experiences of two characters - portrayed by Chelsea Fingal DeSouza and CodyRay Caho. Through song and performance art we see the conflict of each character in relation to each other as they struggle to connect and search for the empathy needed to do so.

Music and poetry spanning over 2600 years of human experience highlight humanity's vital connections, which affirm our innate value both in and outside of our contributions as members of society. We are alive BEFORE BODY MEETS EARTH!

**Michael Lewis**

# Program

Ich wollt ein Sträußlein binden .....◆ Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)  
Op. 68

Bonjour! .....◆ Judith Cloud (b. 1989)  
from Quatre mélodies de Ronsard

Long Goodbye .....◆ Maria Thompson Corley (b. 1966)  
from Grasping Water

You lay so still in the sunshine .....◆ Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875 – 1912)

Bone Needles .....◆ Gilda Lyons (b. 1975)

Black Thunder .....◆ Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980)

Heart .....◆ Robert Owens (1925 – 2017)  
from Heart on the Wall

I know my mind .....◆ Margaret Bonds (1913 – 1972)

Ach neige, du Schmerzenreiche .....◆ Carl Loewe (1776 – 1869)

~~~~~ BRIEF PAUSE ~~~~~

The Guest House .....◆ Anne LeBaron (b. 1953)  
from Radiant Depth Unfolded

Im Nebel .....◆ Robert Owens

The sky lingers above  
When we look back .....◆ Michael Lewis (b. 1991)

Love let the wind cry .....◆ Undine Smith Moore (1904 – 1989)

Aussi bien que les cigales .....◆ Francis Poulenc (1899 – 1963)  
from Calligrammes

Remembrance .....◆ Robert Owens  
from Heart on the Wall

"Raise your words, not your voice.  
It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder."  
- Rumi

### **Ich wollt ein Sträußlein binden,**

Ich wollt ein Sträußlein binden,  
Da kam die dunkle Nacht,  
Kein Blümlein war zu finden,  
Sonst hätt' ich dir's gebracht.

I meant to make you a posy,  
But dark night then came,  
There were no flowers to be found,  
Or I'd have brought you some.

Da flossen von den Wangen  
Mir Tränen in den Klee,  
Ein Blümlein aufgegangen  
Ich nun im Garten seh.

Tears then flowed down my cheeks  
Into the clover,  
And now I saw a flower  
That had sprung up in the garden.

Das wollte ich dir brechen  
Wohl in dem dunklen Klee,  
Da fing es an zu sprechen:  
"Ach, tue mir nicht weh!"

I meant to pick it for you  
There in the dark clover,  
When it started to speak:  
'Ah, do not hurt me!

"Sei freundlich im Herzen,  
Betracht dein eigen Leid,  
Und lasse mich in Schmerzen  
Nicht sterben vor der Zeit!"

Be kind in your heart,  
Consider your own suffering,  
And do not make me die  
In torment before my time!

Und hätt's nicht so gesprochen,  
Im Garten ganz allein,  
So hätt' ich dir's gebrochen,  
Nun aber darf's nicht sein.

And had it not spoken these words,  
All alone in the garden,  
I'd have picked it for you,  
But now that cannot be.

Mein Schatz ist ausgeblieben,  
Ich bin so ganz allein.  
Im Lieben wohnt Betrüben,  
Und kann nicht anders sein.

My sweetheart stayed away,  
I am utterly alone.  
Sadness dwells in loving,  
And cannot be otherwise

- Clemens Brentano (1778 - 1842)

## Bonjour

Bonjour mon cœur  
Bonjour mon cœur,  
Bonjour ma douce vie,  
Bonjour mon œil  
Bonjour ma chère amie!

Hello, my heart  
Hello, my heart;  
hello, my sweet life;  
hello, my eye;  
hello, my dear friend.

Hé! bonjour, ma toute belle,  
Ma mignardise,  
Bonjour, mes délices,  
Mon amour,  
Mon doux printemps,  
Ma douce fleur nouvelle,  
Mon doux plaisir,  
Ma douce colombe,  
Mon passereau, ma gentille tourterelle!  
Bonjour ma douce rebelle.

He, hello, my beauty,  
my pink flower/cuteness;  
hello, my sweet one,  
my love,  
my sweet spring,  
my delicate new flower,  
my sweet pleasure,  
my gentle little dove,  
my sparrow, my turtledove!  
Hello, my sweet rebel.

- Pierre de Ronsard (1524 -1585)

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## Long Goodbye

I live in the past  
to stay in your arms;  
your lips pressed gently against my cheek,  
my body snug  
in the sheltering warmth of your skin.

Oh, my darling friend!  
The handful of sweet manna you gave me  
melted in my mouth,  
but with no prospect  
of further nourishment,  
I wander through this pathless wilderness  
emptier  
than if your unexpected morsel  
had been denied.

- Maria Thompson Corley (b. 1966)

## You lay so still in the sunshine

You lay so still in the sunshine,  
So still in that hot sweet hour –  
That the timid things of the forest land  
Came close; a butterfly lit on your hand,  
Mistaking it for a flow'r.

You scarcely breath'd in your slumber,  
So dreamless it was, so deep–  
While the warm air stirr'd in my veins like wine,  
The air that had blown thro' a jasmine vine,  
But you slept – and I let you sleep.

- Marguerite Radclyffe-Hall (1880 - 1943)

## **Black Thunder**

It was late. Her light was the only light  
That could be seen from the street below.  
I held a bouquet of roses, standing  
in her doorway, a useless grin on my face.  
She smiled sympathetically  
And looked away.

Last night I drank until my head  
Roared with black thunder.  
I staggered home, feeling lost.  
Two dogs whispered gossip to each other.  
Somewhere sirens wailed like ghosts.  
I laid down on my floor  
And watched the ceiling fan spin  
When it wasn't on.

When the days pile up, like neglected dishes  
In the sink. I start to panic,  
Lost in the dark rooms of my imagination.  
She sounds very bored when we talk.  
Every smile a secret sneer.  
My brain whirls like a table-saw.

- Luke Stromberg

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## **I know my mind**

I know my mind and I have made my choice;  
Not from your temper does my doom depend;  
Love me or love me not, you have no voice  
In this, which is my portion to the end.  
Your presence and your favours, the full part  
That you could give, you now can take away:  
What lies between your beauty and my heart  
Not even you can trouble or betray.  
Mistake me not—unto my inmost core  
I do desire your kiss upon my mouth;  
They have not craved a cup of water more  
That bleach upon the deserts of the south;  
Here might you bless me; what you cannot do  
Is bow me down, who have been loved by you.

- Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)

## **Heart**

Pierrot  
Took his heart  
And hung it  
On a wayside wall.

He said,  
"Look, Passers-by,  
Here is my heart!"

But no one was curious.  
No one cared at all

That there hung  
Pierrot's heart  
On the public wall.

So Pierrot  
Took his heart  
And hid it  
Far away.

Now people wonder  
Where his heart is  
Today.

- Langston Hughes (1902 - 1967)

## **Ach neige, Du Schmerzenreiche**

Ach neige,  
Du Schmerzenreiche,  
Dein Antlitz gnädig meiner Not!

Das Schwert im Herzen,  
Mit tausend Schmerzen  
Blickst auf zu deines Sohnes Tod.

Zum Vater blickst du,  
Und Seufzer schickst du  
Hinauf um sein' und deine Not.

Wer fühlet,  
Wie wühlet  
Der Schmerz mir im Gebein?  
Was mein armes Herz hier banget,  
Was es zittert, was verlanget,  
Weißt nur du, nur du allein!

Wohin ich immer gehe,  
Wie weh, wie weh, wie wehe  
Wird mir im Busen hier!  
Ich bin ach kaum alleine,  
Ich wein', ich wein', ich weine,  
Das Herz zerbricht in mir.

Die Scherben vor meinem Fenster  
Bethaut' ich mit Thränen, ach!  
Als ich am frühen Morgen  
Dir diese Blumen brach.

Schien hell in meine Kammer  
Die Sonne früh herauf,  
Saß ich in allem Jammer  
In meinem Bett' schon auf.

Hilf! rette mich von Schmach und Tod!  
Ach neige,  
Du Schmerzenreiche,  
Dein Antlitz gnädig meiner Noth!

## **Ah lean down, you who are full of sorrow**

Ah lean down,  
you who are full of sorrow,  
incline your gracious face toward my distress!

A sword in your heart,  
with a thousand agonies,  
you gaze at your dead son.

You look up to His Father,  
and send up sighs  
for His and your misery.

Who can feel  
how insidiously  
the pain eats my very bones?  
what my poor heart now dreads here,  
what makes it tremble and what it craves?  
Only you can know, only you alone!

Wherever I go, all the time,  
how it aches, how I grieve  
here inside my heart!  
Ah, I am hardly alone  
before I start weeping and weeping,  
my heart breaking within me.

The flower-pots before my window  
I drenched with my tears, ah!  
when in early morning  
I brought you these flowers.

When the sun shone brightly into my  
chamber early this morning,  
I was in complete misery,  
sitting up in my bed already.

Help! Rescue me from disgrace and death!  
Ah, lean down,  
you who are full of sorrow,  
incline your gracious face to my distress!

# BRIEF PAUSE

“When you’re drowning you don’t think, ‘I would be incredibly pleased if someone would notice me.’ You just scream.”  
- John Lennon

## **The Guest House**

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they’re a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond

- Rumi (1207 -1273)

## **Im Nebel**

Seltsam, im Nebel zu wandern!  
Einsam ist jeder Busch und Stein,  
Kein Baum sieht den anderen,  
Jeder ist allein.

Voll von Freunden war mir die Welt,  
Als noch mein Leben Licht war,  
Nun, da der Nebel fällt,  
Ist keiner mehr sichtbar.

Wahrlich, keiner ist weise,  
Der nicht das Dunkle kennt,  
Das unentrinnbar und leise  
Von allen ihn trennt.

Seltsam, im Nebel zu wandern!  
Leben ist einsam sein.  
Kein Mensch kennt den anderen,  
Jeder ist allein.

- Hermann Hesse (1877 - 1962)

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## **In the fog**

Strange, to wander in the fog.  
Every bush and stone is alone,  
No tree sees the other,  
Everyone is alone.

My world was full of friends  
When my life was filled with light,  
Now, as the fog descends  
None is still to be seen.

Truly, no one is wise  
Who does not know the dark  
Which inescapably and  
Separates him from everything else.

Strange, to wander in the fog,  
To live is to be alone.  
No man knows the other,  
Everyone is alone.

## **The sky lingers above**

The sky lingers above  
Carrying with her the pregnant message of relief  
We turn our wilted petals down to  
our earth  
Bowing to unstoppable will  
My step reaches out into the sun  
Thrushing my soul into a field  
of toasty wild flowers  
She stretches her eternal reaches  
My mind fears the creeping doom

This skin tingles under her pressure  
Yearning  
For the violet damn  
To dissolve into its hazy edges  
To breathe in from source  
And exhale  
the deep forest  
Feeling, through each ringlet of smokey  
leaves,  
That connection to all who fear.

- Dicky Dutton (b. 1990)

## When we look back

When we look back to find something  
in dead times,  
are we separate from it?  
What am I?  
Body, thoughts, memories, feelings

Are they mine?  
Am I formed from dead history?  
My family,  
How much of me is you  
regenerated?

Do I look only to the  
rushing in me to hear  
those lost times?

My DNA is molded by my mothers, our mothers  
- their questions  
- their answers  
  
- Dicky Dutton

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## Love let the wind cry

Love let the wind cry  
On the dark mountain,  
Bending the ash trees  
And the tall hemlocks  
With the great voice of  
Thunderous legions,  
How I adore thee.

Let the hoarse torrent  
In the blue canyon,  
Murmuring mightily  
Out of the gray mist  
Of primal chaos  
Cease not proclaiming  
How I adore thee.

Let the long rhythm  
Of crunching rollers,  
Breaking and bursting  
On the white seaboard  
Titan and tireless,  
Tell, while the world stands,  
How I adore thee.

Love, let the clear call  
Of the tree cricket,  
Frailest of creatures,  
Green as the young grass,  
Mark with his trilling  
Resonant bell-note,  
How I adore thee.

Let the glad lark-song  
Over the meadow,  
That melting lyric  
Of molten silver,  
Be for a signal  
To listening mortals,  
How I adore thee.

But, more than all sounds,  
Surer, serener,  
Fuller of passion  
And exultation,  
Let the hushed whisper  
In thine own heart say,  
How I adore thee.

- Sappho (c630 - c570 BC)

## Aussi biens que les cigales

|                     |                              |                                |
|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>gens du midi</i> | ne savez pas                 | M                              |
| <i>gens du mi</i>   | creuser que                  | ais                            |
| <i>di vous n'</i>   | vous ne sa                   | vous                           |
| <i>avez donc</i>    | vez pas vous                 | savez                          |
| <i>pas regar</i>    | éclairer ni                  | encore                         |
| <i>dé les ciga</i>  | voir Que vous                | boire com le jour              |
| <i>les que vous</i> | manque-t-il                  | me les ci de gloire            |
|                     | donc pour                    | gales ô se                     |
|                     | voir aus                     | gens du mi c ra                |
|                     | si bien                      | di gens du reusez ce           |
|                     | que les                      | soleil gens qui voyez bu lui   |
|                     | ciga                         | devriez savoir vez pisserez où |
| les                 | creuser et voir              | comme vous                     |
|                     | aussi bien pour le           | les ciga sau                   |
|                     | moins aussi bien             | les rez                        |
|                     | que les cigales              | creu                           |
| Eh quoi vous savez  | <i>gens du Midi il faut</i>  | ser                            |
| boire et ne savez   | <i>creuser voir boire</i>    | pour                           |
| plus pisser utile   | <i>pisser aussi bien que</i> | bien                           |
| ment comme les      | <i>les cigales</i>           | sor                            |
| cigales             | <i>pour chan</i>             | tir                            |
|                     | <i>ter com</i>               | au                             |
| LA JOIE             | <i>me elles</i>              | so                             |
| ADORABLE            |                              | leil                           |
| DE LA PAIX          |                              |                                |
| SOLAIRE             |                              |                                |

Southern folks, southern folks you haven't regarded the cicadas and so you don't know how to dig and so you don't know how to brighten up nor to see what you're missing [that would help you] see as well as the cicadas  
 But you still know how to drink like the cicadas oh southern folks sunshine folks  
 Folks who ought to know how to dig and look as well as for the least as well as the cicadas  
 Eh what! You know how to drink and don't know how to piss usefully like the cicadas  
 The day of glory will be the one you know how to dig so as to reach the sun  
 Dig look drink piss like the cicadas  
 Southern folks you must dig look drink piss  
 As well as the cicadas to sing as they do  
 THE ADORABLE JOY OF SOLAR PEACE

- Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918)

## Remembrance

To wander through this living world  
 and leave uncut the roses  
 is to remember fragrance where  
 the flower no scent encloses.

- Langston Hughes (1902 - 1967)

# The Team



Soprano **Chelsea Fingal DeSouza** is an expressive and versatile performer versed in a range of genres from German and French song to contemporary works to early music. Some of her recent performances include Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with David Alan Miller of the Albany Symphony, as well as the theatrical recital *Before Body Meets Earth*, which she co-produced. She has premiered contemporary pieces such as the *Retail Anthem* by Daniel Santiago with the Fill in the Blank Ensemble, *The Burning Heart Anthology II* by Michael Thomas Fomai at National Sawdust, *Three Poems* by Jason Yang with the DaCapo Chamber Players, and has performed *Studies in Hope* by Andre Myers with the Albany Symphony. Some of

DeSouza's operatic performances have included the title role in George Handel's *Acis and Galatea* with the Broad Street Orchestra, *Atalanta* in Handel's *Serse*, as well as *Rest in Pieces*, a pastiche opera performed with The Orchestra Now. DeSouza received her Bachelor's in Music from the New England Conservatory, and her Master's from the Vocal Arts Program at Bard College.

Curiosity in words, specificity, and emotional literacy lie at the heart of singer and queer performance artist, **CodyRay Caho's** (they/she) work. Her collaborations with organizations like Aural Compass Projects, Opera Philadelphia, Wear Yellow Proudly, Bard College, The Why Collective, Cincinnati Opera, and Arizona Opera have highlighted the importance of working toward equity and creative joy in herself and surrounding communities. Most recently they have collaborated with The Why Collective's "Vexations in Time" - a 14 hour long, interdisciplinary performance art piece where CodyRay appeared under the pseudonym, Dicky Dutton, premiering two original works commissioned for the event - "Inconsequential noises break" and "I am in the sun."

They are especially active in repertoire native to North America as seen in projects like "Before Body Meets Earth," the U.S. premiere of "Another Brick in the Wall," "Living Scars: Songs of Trauma and Healing," the premiere of Francine Trester's chamber opera "Keepers of the Light," and "Sing Bard!" - a program of American music with mezzo-soprano, Stephanie Blythe, and pianist, Craig Terry.

Off the stage, CodyRay exercises other creativities through their work with Aural Compass Projects as administrative assistant and creator/project manager of the organization's Emerging Composer's Competition and all associated events. Most mornings they can be found seated next to their bunnies writing poems prior to a day of teaching in the greater Philadelphia area with partners of Opera Philadelphia's educational outreach department.





Philadelphia-based pianist and vocal coach, **Michael Lewis**, is a renowned collaborator known for his exciting interpretations and mastery of a multitude of styles. In 2021 he joined the faculty of Academy of Vocal Arts as a vocal coach and collaborative pianist. At Temple University, and University of Pennsylvania he serves as a vocal coach and music director of opera workshop courses. In 2019, Michael formed Aural Compass Projects. In addition to his work with ACP

Michael has established a collaborative relationship with many singers performing with Aural Compass Projects, El Paso Opera's Giving Voice Recital Series, Opera Saratoga's America Sings Recital Series, and Aspen Music Festival. In addition to vocal collaboration, Michael collaborates with smaller and larger chamber groups ranging from duos, trios, and quartets to work with orchestras like Albany Symphony and Aspen Chamber Symphony, and Aspen Contemporary Ensemble. Michael earned a Masters of Music degree from Arizona State University in collaborative piano and a Bachelors of Music at Ithaca College where he studied vocal performance as a baritone in the studio of Dr. David Parks. Previous appointments include Vocal Coach and Repetiteur on productions at Opera Philadelphia, Cincinnati Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, Portland Opera, Mill City Summer Opera, and Tri-Cities Opera, Chorus Master at Arizona MusicFest and Tri-Cities Opera, and Assistant Music Director in the Marion Roose Pullin Studio at Arizona Opera.

**CHECK OUT OUR OTHER  
PROJECTS ON FACEBOOK,  
INSTAGRAM, & YOUTUBE!**





## **Aural Compass Projects' Emerging Composer Competition**

In an effort to solidify a vital connection to new music and especially the genre of art song, it is our goal to share the transformative and regenerative powers of intimate song sharing, and, by doing so, instill incentive for the growth of this genre.

Winners of this competition receive a cash prize and have their submitted work produced, performed, and recorded in an upcoming ACP project. This annual competition is open to composition students of any age whose submitted work meets the requirements.

**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COMPETITION HERE!**



[www.auralcompassprojects.org/competition](http://www.auralcompassprojects.org/competition)



Aural Compass Projects is a non-profit music organization founded in 2019 that is dedicated to performing new and less-performed works. We strive to foster and develop a solid moral compass which guides our work in advancing towards equality and better representation in the arts. We believe that following a strong code of ethics while cultivating a space for new music and music that has not had the opportunity of being fully appreciated is our duty as artistic ambassadors and is incredibly important for the collective growth of our community and world.

In its first season, ACP produced four projects with 7 performances in 5 cities in New York and Arizona. The inaugural season started off with *Songs of the Rainbow*, a celebration of American, British, and Canadian LGBTQ+ composers, performed in October 2019 at the Marc Scorca Hall at Opera America in Manhattan. *Songs Without Borders*, a recital featuring composers and performers who are American immigrants and refugees, was then performed at the First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society in Brooklyn and the Church of the Messiah in Rhinebeck, NY in December 2019. In January 2020, ACP took a trip to Phoenix, AZ with mezzo-soprano Daveda Karanas to produce two performances of *Much Has Fallen Silent*, a recital honoring the lives and works of five Jewish composers who were affected by the Holocaust. They wrapped up their exciting first season with *Lift Every Voice*, a festival of songs written by African-American composers, again at First Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society in Brooklyn.

In its second season, ACP shifted, along with the rest of the world, to a digital platform and created five new projects that were able to be presented virtually. In its first venture into educational resources, ACP created *We, Too, Sing America*, a 13-episode series exploring the lives and works of 13 African-American composers and poets of song. Last summer also saw the start of their live talkshow and podcast, *What's the Tea with ACP*, hosted by Elliott Paige. Adding to the list of projects outside of the performance realm, was the *Emerging Composer Competition* in which composers were asked to submit works that reflect both their values and those of ACP. ACP still achieved success with presenting two main performance projects on a digital platform: *On Belonging*, a program celebrating Asian composers and performers with Fleur Barron and Myra Huang, and *Brown Sounds*, an award-winning collaboration with LA Opera and Raehann Bryce-Davis. At the end of last season, ACP held a workshop performance of *Before Body Meets Earth* in the Hudson Valley of New York in preparation for its Philadelphia premiere in November 2021.

ACP looks forward to growing and connecting with more people in the future as they continue to promote new and unheard works by composers of all backgrounds.

**Thank you for joining us today!**  
**For more about us, visit our website and social media.**  
[www.auralcompassprojects.org](http://www.auralcompassprojects.org)

# ACP 21/22 SEASON AT A GLANCE



Before Body Meets Earth

November 19 & 20

Philadelphia, PA

Lift Every Voice

April 1 & 2

Philadelphia, PA



The Greatest Personal  
Privation

2022 Digital Release



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