



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY CHORAL DIVISION

ALZHEIMER'S STORIES

Music by Robert S. Cohen
Libretto by Herschel Garfein

MSU STATE SINGERS

Gary Packwood, *conductor*
Christy Lee, *rehearsal and performance accompanist*

featuring

CORINNE REECE, *mezzo soprano*
CHRISTOPHER WITHROW, *baritone-bass*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2021

6:30 PM at First Baptist Church Starkville

CHORAL EXCELLENCE, HEALING, & COMMUNITY

Program

WELCOME

Kathy Van Cleave, Director of Education and Outreach, The MIND Center
University of Mississippi Medical Center

WHEN MEMORY FADES

arranged by Eric Nelson
text by Mary Louise Bringle
music by Jayne Southwick Cool

With the well-crafted and comforting text about dementia by Mary Louise Bringle and the flowing and tender melody by Jayne Southwick Cool, Eric Nelson has created something deep, rich and thoughtful. The piano accompaniment is supportive yet simple and light, allowing the text and elegant choral writing to be always at the fore. ~J.W. Pepper

WANTING MEMORIES

Ysaye M. Barnwell

Wanting Memories was part of a suite of songs commissioned for a dance theater piece called "Crossings." "I did dedicate the WANTING to my father when we recorded it, but it was written while both my parents were still alive. What was special though was that I am an only child and when my father died and then my mother, and I prepared to sell the house I grew up in, I found bags of photos, letters and other memorabilia - the kind of things especially an only child hopes for." ~ Ysaye M. Barnwell

Alzheimer's Stories

- I. The Numbers
- II. The Stories
- III. For the Caregivers

music by Robert S. Cohen
libretto by Herschel Garfein

Corinne Reece, *mezzo-soprano*
Christopher Withrow, *baritone*
Chamber Orchestra

Mississippi State University State Singers
Gary Packwood, *conductor*

Alzheimer's Stories will be presented with subtitles. Please silence all electronic devices.

Please light your candles, stand and sing one verse of Amazing Grace, remain standing and join the State Singers the last phrase – words are printed below

AMAZING GRACE

Robert T. Gibson

(Audience and State Singers)

*Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.*

(State Singers sing)

(Audience and State Singers)

I once was lost, but now am found, was blind, but now I see.

Program Notes

In 2008, a member of the Susquehanna Valley Chorale who asked to remain anonymous made a donation to the chorale to help fund the commissioning of a musical work on the subject of Alzheimer's disease to honor his parents, who had both died of it. In collaboration with 2012 Grammy Award winning opera librettist Herschel Garfein (Elmer Gantry), a blog was set up on the choir's website www.svcmusic.org to record stories by chorus members and the local community describing experiences with relatives and friends who had Alzheimer's disease with a selected group of those stories becoming the basis for the work: Alzheimer's Stories for soloists, chorus and large ensemble.

The work is in three movements the arc of which loosely mimics the progression of the disease:

THE NUMBERS – an objective description of the discovery of the disease by Dr. Alois Alzheimer in 1901 including the number of individuals currently afflicted, future projections and dramatized conversations between Dr. Alzheimer and his first patient, Auguste Dieter. The movement ends with an extended setting of a quote from his patient Ich hab mich verloren, “I have lost myself.”

THE STORIES – a pastiche of a number of selected stories taken from the choir's blog. With a mixture of pathos, poignancy and humor, we meet a number of individuals afflicted with the disease, portrayed by the two soloists, as well as the recollections of family members. Two notables: a woman who still thinks she's on a boat to Panama with her father; and a WWII Navy veteran who repeats the same bawdy story of the war so many times that the chorus can recite it by heart.

FOR THE CAREGIVERS – The most difficult part of writing a work about such a terrible and ultimately hopeless disease was how to end the work with some semblance of hope. The clue came in a recollection by one of the chorus members about a visit to a nursing home where a patient asked them to sing. When asked what, the patient replied: “Sing anything.” First referenced in the second movement, this idea became the centerpiece and focus of the last movement. The core of the brilliantly realized libretto is as follows:

*Find those you love in the dark and light.
Help them through the days and nights.
Keep faith. They sense what they cannot show.
Love and music are the last things to go. Sing anything.*

- Robert S. Cohen

Biographies



Raised by two musicians, **Corinne Reece** has been singing as long as she can remember. As a graduate of Mississippi State University's music department in 2018, she went on to finish a Master's degree in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Mobile where she was selected as the Area Award recipient upon graduation in December of 2020. As a Zwischen, she had the honor of performing the role of Juliette in Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* and Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* during her stay at the University of Mobile and participating in multiple scenes programs. She also portrayed Irene Molloy in Joe Jefferson Player's performance of *Hello Dolly!* Corinne is honored to have made her way back to the Starkville area where she maintains a private voice studio, teaches yoga and travels for performance opportunities. During her downtime, she enjoys drinking coffee and going on walks with her dog Nina. She is honored by the opportunity to sing a work that is so poignant.

Baritone **Christopher Withrow** has been an active performer with Townsend Opera Players, Northstar Opera Company, Modesto Symphony Orchestra, Shasta College, Simpson University, the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Opera Theater and other ensembles in the southwestern region. A native of Redding, California, Dr. Withrow has been seen in the title role in *Gianni Schicchi*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, and Count Almaviva in *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He has performed with Townsend Opera as Doctor Grenville in *La Traviata*, Le Dancaïre in *Carmen*, and Prince Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*. Concert works to his credit include Johannes Brahms's *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem*, Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*, W. A. Mozart's *Vesperae Solennes De Confessore*, J. S. Bach's *Coffee Cantata*, Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, and Felix Mendelssohn's *Psalm 42*. Dr. Withrow holds a Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance from California State University, Stanislaus, where he was a student of Joseph Wiggett and a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Music where he was a student of Tod Fitzpatrick. In addition, he was the 2011 CSU Stanislaus solo competition winner, the 2015 NATS district winner, the 2019 Vann Vocal Institute winner, and the recipient of a major scholarship from the McConnell Foundation. In 2016, Mr. Withrow was awarded a Graduate Assistantship at the University of Alabama where he recently completed the Doctor of Musical Arts degree studying with Paul Houghtaling. Recently Dr. Withrow has appeared as James Agee in the world premiere broadcast of Joseph Lander's opera, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, and on the album, *Lost Days: Modern American Song Cycles for Baritone and Piano*.

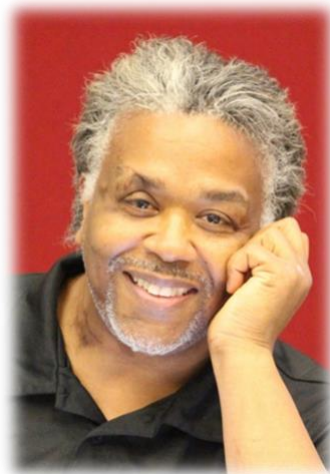




Christy Lee continues to lead a diverse career as a collaborative pianist, chamber musician, vocal coach, and educator. In the world of opera, Lee has worked as pianist, coach, and assistant conductor at Opera Memphis, Chattanooga Opera, Pensacola Opera, Cleveland Opera, Knoxville Opera, Marble City Opera, Crested Butte Music Festival, Lake Placid International Voice Seminar, Pine Mountain Music Festival, and Dorian Opera Theatre. From 2008 to 2014 she was on the faculty at the College of The Bahamas where along with COB colleagues Christine Gangelhoff (flute) and Christian Justilien (euphonium), she was a founding member of *C Force*, the premiere chamber group of the College of The Bahamas. Active as a recitalist and a chamber musician, Dr. Lee collaborates with both instrumentalists and vocalists. She has appeared in concert throughout North America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Recent performances have been with Stanford Olsen, tenor, with the Nassau Music Society, cellist Kenneth Law at the Grand Bahamas Performing Arts

Society, and soprano Caroline Schiller at the Memorial Arts Series in Newfoundland, Canada. Dr. Lee was Director of Accompanying and Music Director of UT Opera Theater and the Knoxville Opera Studio at The University of Tennessee for seven years; in addition, she has held academic appointments at The Cleveland Institute of Music, Encore School for Strings, Delta State University, Florida State University, and Maryville College. Dr. Lee holds the DM in Accompanying and Chamber Music from Florida State University where she was the recipient of the prestigious University Fellowship. She received the Bachelor of Music degree, magna cum laude, in piano performance from The University of Alabama and the Master of Music degree in collaborative piano from The Cleveland Institute of Music, where she was the recipient of the first Madame Gwendolyn Koldofsky Accompanying Award and was recently honored with the Brooks Smith Outstanding Alumni in Collaborative Piano Award.

Recognized as an inspirational and motivational conductor, pedagogue, and lecturer, **Gary Packwood** has appeared throughout North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Now in his 31st year of teaching, Dr. Packwood has conducted all-state and honor choirs in 35 states. During the 2021-2022 academic year, Dr. Packwood is scheduled to conduct the Texas Music Educators Association TB All-State Choir; Wisconsin Music Educators Association SATB Middle – Level All-State Choir; American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Northwestern Regional TB Choir; honor choirs in Mississippi and Louisiana; and the ACDA Midwestern Regional SATB Choir. He will also serve a residency with the School of Music at Wichita State University, adjudicate the Florida Vocal Association's Central State Music Performance Assessment, as well as future conducting engagements with Pacific International Choral Festival (Oregon), Crystal Children's Choir (California), and the Kentucky All-State Choir. Dr. Packwood is currently professor of music, program administrator and director of choral studies at Mississippi State University where he teaches undergraduate and graduate conducting, conducts the Mississippi State University State Singers and the Men of State, and serves as the coordinator of graduate music studies. In 2017 Santa Barbara Music Publishing began the *Gary Packwood Choral Series*, which features compositions that specialize in music for developing and advanced young voices. He also has additional music publications through MusicSpoke and JW Pepper. Dr. Packwood has published articles in the *Choral Journal*, *Teaching Music*, the 2nd Edition of the *AmeriGrove Dictionary*, and a book chapter in GIA's Publication of *Conducting Men's Choirs*.



of Music – FBCS

Danielle Gaudé – Choral Administrator

Dr. Christy Lee, collaborative piano faculty

University of Mississippi MIND Center

Kathy Van Cleave

MSU State Singers

SOPRANO 1

Lauren Boozer
Anna Lee
Briana Taylor
Nyla Thomas
Veronica Washington

SOPRANO 2

Lauren Barr
Carly Ferrell
Kailyn Naquin
Audrey Robertson
Sydney Williams
Amy Lee

ALTO 1

Maddie Bender
Anna Bullock
Audrey Harper
Kimberly Martin
Aliyah Necaise
Sarah Joy Smith
Shelby Vaughn

ALTO 2

Tanisha Brown
Trekiya Brown
Katie Bush
Jordan Cole
Kyana Conway
Reagan Docherty
Asia Ellis
Eleanor Garrard
Taylor Hardy
Evan Maxwell

TENOR 1

Andre Ferguson
Colton Hall
Jackson Valdez
Jackson Wilson
Jonathan Lindamood
Lawson Ashurst
Ty Lofton

TENOR 2

Reese Dunne
Evan Garris
Desmond Henderson
Graham Hughes
Jacob King
Caleb Shirley
Jaylen Stowers
Joseph Zazzara

BASS 1

Paul Beaty
Trevor Blood
Darryl Brundidge
Jennings Duncan
Adonijah Mpinga
Benjamin Somervell
Blaine Smith-Rossell
William Pereira daSilva

BASS 2

Joe Broome
Jaden Cleveland
Austin Gothard
Ross McCleod
Joey Mullins
Quinton Prater
Ross Rutherford
Jarreau Weaver

Chamber Orchestra

Jorge Diez, *clarinet*

*Matthew Haislip, *horn 1*

Ashlyn Hall, *horn 2*

*Tony Kirkland, *trumpet 1*

Addie Holston, *trumpet 2*

*Richard Human, *trombone*

*Blake Ryall, *tuba*

Ben Neal, *marimba/vibraphone*

Gabriella Aranki, *timpani*

*Christy Lee, *piano*

Laura Sandifer, *violin*

Jonah Albert, *cello*

Jonathan Hall, Darren Bass, & Kevin Favela, *percussion*

*Denotes MSU Faculty

Join the MSU Choral Area on Tuesday, November 30
First Baptist Church – Starkville at 7:00 pm for our annual
Christmas Concert

This performance is dedicated to everyone suffering or died from Alzheimer's and their caretakers... Love and Music are the last things to go; Sing anything.

Dorothy Jean Griggs

Dr. T Alan Twietmeyer

Lola Halbrooks

Curtis Orman

Mary Powell

Eugene S. Benvenuti

Ojwang Were

Nettie Davis

Don Long

Charlotte Lillian Barnette

Charles, "Chuck" Blaine

Fanny Lou Vowell

Antonio Pereira da Silva

Jose Marcos da Silva

Elbert "Bill" Head

Marvin Harold Blankenship

Marie Crawford

Mack S. Benson

Tony Barbee

Glenn R. Davis Sr.

Mary Ann Borganelli

Mary B. Walker

Jewel Jacobs

Jean Cappadonna Nichols

Jo Selman

Virgie Necaise

Glenn David Smith

Carol Ann Grinstead Silsby

Martha Jane Phelps Silsby

Mike Conroy

Janie Lee

Fred Lee Love

Bill Hebert

Willie Putnam & Edna Putnam

F. L. Holland

Carol Pendleton

Ernstine Williams

Carol Vickers

Gloria Dunne

Eloise Bayard

Bobby Hutcherson

Patricia May

Patrick Whelan

Olene Thaxton Lee

Inez Nicholson

Paul Douglas Lee

Shirley Rodman

Lynn Johnson

Harriett Moyer

Jacqueline Silvine Clotilde Smith

Jimmy Covin

Iola Jones



Support The MIND Center and you're supporting hope for the millions of people suffering from Alzheimer's and other dementias worldwide. You're supporting research into therapies that will slow, stop, or even prevent these diseases. Any level of support can help us bring Alzheimer's and dementia-care services and support to Mississippians across the state.

<https://www.umc.edu>

Special Thanks

First Baptist Church Starkville

Dr. Tom Jenkins, Minister of Music – FBCS

Dr. Phillip Stockton, associate director, choral studies

Danielle Gaudé – Choral Administrator

Dr. Christy Lee, collaborative piano faculty

University of Mississippi MIND Center

Kathy Van Cleave

Elva Kaye Lance & the Famous Maroon Band

Gabe Aranki