

Don DeLicia

LETTERS & FANTASIES

**Four Sonnets (1964/65)**

after verses by Edna St. Vincent Millay

1. Time Does Not Bring Relief 3:34

2. Loving You Less Than Life 3:16

3. I, Being Born a Woman 1:46

4. What Lips My Lips Have Kissed 4:56

Angela Theis, Soprano

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

**5. Ballade (2008)**

for solo piano 6:31

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

**Black Beads (1969)**

Three Songs for Mezzo-Soprano and Piano

after verses by Richard Kubinski

6. I 1:58

7. II 1:36

8. III 2:05

Annalise Dzwonczyk, Mezzo-Soprano

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

**9. Fantasy (1963)**

for Violin and Piano 5:45

Yury Revich, Violin

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

**10. Letter to Sarah (2015)**

for Baritone, Trumpet, and Piano

after text by Maj. Sullivan Ballou 6:13

Matthew Konopacki, Baritone

Berthold Brauer, Trumpet

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

**11. Letter to Roxane (2017)**

for Cello and Piano,

after theme from opera "Cyrano" 2:27

Aleksey Shadrin, Cello

Ivan Moshchuk, Piano

40:09



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On what seemed to be the coldest day of winter, the doors of the historic Jam Handy Film Studios on East Grand Boulevard opened to welcome artists and producers from around the globe to record the music of David DiChiera. The setting seemed to come straight from Shakespeare's *Tempest* – in the days prior, the Detroit area was subject to a storm that could only be matched by the Bard's sense of drama and tension, leaving half the city without power for days. It was in this stillness after the storm that the first notes of *Letter to Sarah* gently filled the soaring space that was once home to one of the largest production studios in the United States.

Baritone Matthew Konopacki recites with quiet reservation the opening lines of Maj. Sullivan Ballou's letter, channeling with confidence an assertion of love that could only be said if it was known to be for the last time. It is quite unusual for an artsong to begin with a recitative. With piano and trumpet conversing at ease in the background, the text begins to come to life and transcend us to a different world.

The harmonies draw inspiration from traditions of the grand Romantic style - it is here that DiChiera is in his element and at the height of expression. This style is an essential connection to the story of perseverance and dedication that has defined the DiChiera legacy. While different compositional vogues have come and gone in the span of the last hundred years, DiChiera stays true to a keen sense of harmony and melody.

The *Four Sonnets after the verses of Edna St. Vincent Millay* are no strangers to dissonance. One feels the harsh inevitability in the first half step of *Time Does Not Bring Relief*, simply two notes neighboring each other, yet torn apart by an immense energy and distance. It is upon this dissonance that soprano Angela Theis descends with vivid concentration.

If the first sonnet is a thorough exploration of time, *Loving You Less Than Life* floats outside of time and space. It is in these melodic lines, where piano and voice finally converge as one in the end, we find a sense of love without barriers and limits. This is not always the case for love - *I, Being Born a Woman* starkly contrasts with playful sarcasm a sense of sexuality that needs no romantic sentiment.

For whom does the bell toll in *What Lips my Lips have Kissed*? Perhaps we all are waiting for the day that life comes to collect and shake us out of fantasy into stark reality. And yet, even then, may we have the courage to find and grasp a melody of light, as is the case with the penultimate line of the final sonnet, "I only know that summer sang in me." It is this line that repeats and never tires, a perpetual light that keeps shining as a beacon of promise for better days and a confirmation of life lived with purpose.

These bells continue to echo in the *Ballade* for piano solo, where a dark world of fantasy alludes to demonic elements akin to Dante's *Inferno*. It is with this ferocity that violinist Yury Revich strikes the strings of a Stradivarius in the development of the *Fantasy for Violin and Piano*, climbing through the upper registers tirelessly, driving forward only to dissolve into emptiness on a single sound, without any resolution.

The three mysterious *Black Beads* are a sudden migration from DiChiera's usual style. The minimal texts of his personal friend, poet, and Detroit-native Richard Kubinski, who penned the lines at not even 20 years of age and died tragically shortly thereafter, are painted with a musical setting that is just as bare in its essence. It is from this very chromatic minimalism that emerges a haunting potency expressed by mezzo-soprano Annalise Dzwonczyk, who floats over detached lines intertwining tensely. It is here that the distance between harmony and melody seems to be at its greatest expanse. This is the dark forest of which Dante speaks in the opening lines of *La Divina Commedia* where the straightforward pathway has been lost. And it is these songs that mark the beginning of a professional departure for DiChiera - a return to composition would only be prompted several decades later.

The final *Letter to Roxane* is based on one of the last duets of DiChiera's grand opera, *Cyrano*. How can we imagine Roxane's emotions when she finally understands that she has loved only one being, but has lost him twice? And yet, out of this tragic story, cellist Aleksey Shadrin illuminates a melodic line that brings life full circle. It is here where we come close to a truth that needs no defense, it is the genuine simplicity that we are lucky to find, if only once in a lifetime. It is a feeling of love and of gratitude, of light and of hope; it is a feeling that vanishes just as suddenly as it appears; it is this moment. — Ivan Moshchuk, April 2017



Soprano **Angela Theis** has captivated the attention of international audiences and critics alike, while remaining active in her hometown Detroit area. In 2016-2017, she made her debut as Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* with Toledo Opera and returns to Michigan Opera Theatre as Frasquita in *Carmen* and Beth in *Little Women* through her engagement as Michigan Opera Theatre Studio Artist.

Ms. Theis has been honored with numerous grants and awards, most notably as a fellow to study under Barbara Bonney at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, as the recipient of both the Audience Choice Award and 2nd Prize in the 2013 AIMS Meistersinger Competition, and as a 2012 Michigan winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. While a resident artist with Utah Opera, she made her professional debut as the Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel* and performed in the contemporary opera *Little Women* as Beth. In her final year at New England Conservatory, she was seen as Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel* and as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, for which the Boston Globe praised her "bright, bold, and beguilingly sung" performance. Ms. Theis holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame.

[www.angelatheis.com](http://www.angelatheis.com)

The first Michigan resident to receive the exceptionally prized Gilmore Young Artist Award, pianist **Ivan Moshchuk** has quickly become one of classical music's most unconventional emerging artists.

He has appeared in concert at the BANFF Music Festival, Great Lakes Chamber Music Festival, Gilmore International Keyboard Festival and Verbier Festival, on stages such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Merkin Hall in New York, and alongside the South Carolina Philharmonic, Kharkiv Philharmonic, and Lansing Symphony orchestras, as well as the Telegraph and Attacca quartets, among others.

Artists he has worked under include Ivan Moravec, Ferenc Rados, Leon Fleisher, and Menahem Pressler. Moshchuk is a graduate of the Peabody Institute in Baltimore and an alumnus of the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris.

[www.ivanmoshchuk.com](http://www.ivanmoshchuk.com)

Mezzo-soprano **Annalise Dzwonczyk** grew up in Avon Lake, Ohio, and completed Bachelor and Master of Music degrees at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music with honors. During her studies she performed notably as L'enfant, Rosina, and Susanna, and was a prize winner in three consecutive Opera Guild of Dayton Tri-State College Vocal Competitions. Annalise is a proud alumna of the Wolf Trap Opera Studio, where she appeared as Gossip #1 in Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*. In 2014, she was selected for the prestigious Houston Grand Opera Young Artists Vocal Academy. She is thrilled to embrace a wide variety of classical vocal literature and continues to be active on both concert and operatic stages.

[www.annalisedzwonczyk.com](http://www.annalisedzwonczyk.com)

At only 25 years of age, violinist **Yury Revich** is already a multi-faceted artist of incredible depth and maturity. Winner of an ECHO Klassik 2016 "Newcomer of the Year" award, "Young Artist of the Year 2015" at the International Classical Music Awards and "Young Musician of the Year" by the Beethoven Center Vienna, he is one of the most expressive and versatile musicians of his generation.

Revich made his debut at Carnegie Hall in 2009 and La Scala in 2013, and his concerts since then have included performances at the Berlin Philharmonie, Berlin Konzerthaus, Vienna Musikverein, Zurich Tonhalle, Vienna Konzerthaus, Leipzig Gewandhaus and Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow. His recordings are featured on labels such as Sony Classical and Odradek as well as a recording with ARS records for which he won his ECHO Klassik Award.

Since February 2016 Revich performs on the Stradivari "Princess Aurora" from 1709 placed at his disposal by the Goh Family Foundation in Singapore.

[www.yuryrevich.com](http://www.yuryrevich.com)

Baritone **Matthew Konopacki**, a native of Michigan, is an active performer of both classical and contemporary works. Equally comfortable on both the operatic and the concert stage, his repertoire ranges from the cantatas of J.S. Bach, to the avant-garde chamber music of Lee Hyla. Matthew holds a Master's degree in Vocal Performance from the Moores School of Music at The University of Houston and has appeared as a young artist with Pensacola Opera and the Janiec Opera Company. He currently resides in the Metro Detroit area.

Trumpet player **Berthold Brauer** is based in Dresden, Germany. After classical training from the age of 10, he was accepted in the jazz class at the Hochschule für Musik in Dresden where he is currently finishing his Master's degree under the guidance of Till Brönner, Malte Burba and Sebastian Studnitzky. He has become known as one of the most versatile young musicians in Germany, and is currently a soloist at the all German Bundesjazzorchester.

Cellist **Aleksey Shadrin** was born in 1993 into a Ukrainian family of musicians in Kharkiv. At the age of seven he entered the Kharkiv National University of Arts for gifted children. He enrolled as a junior student at Hanover University of Music, Drama and Media and later continued his studies with Professor Leonid Gorokhov. Since 2004 he has been a scholar of the International Charity Foundation founded by the violinist and conductor Vladimir Spivakov.

Shadrin was a finalist at the third David Popper International Competition in Hungary in 2005 and at the sixth "Nutcracker" International Competition in Moscow the same year. He has performed as a soloist in his home country, Ukraine, as well as Russia and France, appearing in concerts with artists such as Pavel Baleff, Valeriy Sokolov and Evgeny Izotov.

Since October 2016 Aleksey Shadrin has been studying as a Young Soloist at Kronberg Academy with Frans Helmerson. These studies are funded by the Nikolas Gruber Stipendium. Mr. Shadrin plays a modern instrument by violin maker Haiko Seifert from Plauen.

## FOUR SONNETS

Edna St. Vincent Millay, 1892 - 1950

1

Time does not bring relief; you all have lied  
Who told me time would ease me of my pain!  
I miss him in the weeping of the rain;  
I want him at the shrinking of the tide;  
The old snows melt from every mountain-side,  
And last year's leaves are smoke in every lane;  
But last year's bitter loving must remain  
Heaped on my heart, and my old thoughts abide.  
There are a hundred places where I fear  
To go,—so with his memory they brim.  
And entering with relief some quiet place  
Where never fell his foot or shone his face  
I say, "There is no memory of him here!"  
And so stand stricken, so remembering him.

2

Loving you less than life, a little less  
Than bitter-sweet upon a broken wall  
Or bush-wood smoke in autumn, I confess  
I cannot swear I love you not at all.  
For there is that about you in this light--  
A yellow darkness, sinister of rain--  
Which sturdily recalls my stubborn sight  
To dwell on you, and dwell on you again.  
And I am made aware of many a week  
I shall consume, remembering in what way  
Your brown hair grows about your brow and cheek,  
And what divine absurdities you say:  
Till all the world, and I, and surely you,  
Will know I love you, whether or not I do.

3 Sonnet XLI

I, being born a woman and distressed  
By all the needs and notions of my kind,  
Am urged by your propinquity to find  
Your person fair, and feel a certain zest  
To bear your body's weight upon my breast:

So subtly is the fume of life designed,  
To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind,  
And leave me once again undone, possessed.  
Think not for this, however, the poor treason  
Of my stout blood against my staggering brain,  
I shall remember you with love, or season  
My scorn with pity, —let me make it plain:  
I find this frenzy insufficient reason  
For conversation when we meet again.

4 Sonnet XLIII

What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,  
I have forgotten, and what arms have lain  
Under my head till morning; but the rain  
Is full of ghosts tonight, that tap and sigh  
Upon the glass and listen for reply,  
And in my heart there stirs a quiet pain  
For unremembered lads that not again  
Will turn to me at midnight with a cry.  
Thus in winter stands the lonely tree,  
Nor knows what birds have vanished one by one,  
Yet knows its boughs more silent than before:  
I cannot say what loves have come and gone,  
I only know that summer sang in me  
A little while, that in me sings no more.

## BLACK BEADS

Richard Kubinski

6 I

I seek a foreign soul  
To spill my sorrow with  
An empty hand to sip my sadness from  
I seek a godly face  
To spread my being on  
And an eye to cry a consolation.

7 II

The night has dreams I know  
For I have kissed them  
And flesh that clings like moist moth wings

A voice that fluent farewell sings  
The night has dreams I know  
For I have lost them.

8 III

Alone  
My sorrow  
Bends the night in prayer  
My silent lips  
Send screeching fingers  
At the face of your God  
To scratch from it  
Some almighty pity.

## 10 LETTER TO SARAH

Maj. Sullivan Ballou (1829-1861)

Dear Sarah,

Indications are very strong that we shall move in a few days.  
Perhaps tomorrow. And lest I should not be able to write you again,  
I feel impelled to write a few lines that may fall under your eyes,  
when I am no more.

Sarah, my love for you is endless, it seems to bind me, with  
mighty cables, that nothing but omnipotence can break. And yet,  
my love of country comes over me like a strong wind and bears me  
irresistibly to the battlefield.

The memories of all those blissful moments I have enjoyed with  
you come crowding over me and I feel so grateful to God and you.  
Oh how hard it is for me to give up and burn to ashes, all the hopes  
of future years when God willing we might still have lived and  
loved together.

If I do not return, my dear Sarah, never forget, how much I love  
you. And when my last breath escapes me on the battlefield, it will  
whisper your name.

But, oh Sarah, if the dead can come back, come back to this earth,  
and flit unseen around those they love, I shall always be with you.  
In the darkest night, in the brightest day, always.

And when the soft breeze fans your cheeks, it shall be my breath  
or the cool air on your throbbing temple, it shall be my spirit pass-  
ing by.

Sarah, do not mourn me dead. Think of me gone and wait for me,  
for we shall meet again.





Born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and raised in Los Angeles, California, David DiChiera moved to suburban Detroit in 1962 to become a professor and ultimately chairman of music at Oakland University. His work at the university laid the foundation for him to create Michigan's own professional opera company, Michigan Opera Theatre, in 1971.

From 1979 to 1983, while president of Opera America, DiChiera spearheaded a major project to develop innovative methods of funding new American musical theater works, and also began an initiative to support companies in efforts to reach previously under-served segments of the population. In addition to running Michigan Opera Theatre, DiChiera directed the Dayton Opera Association for more than 10 years. In 1985, he also founded Opera Pacific in Orange County, California, becoming the only general director in the nation to have founded and led two opera companies in a unique collaboration.

In 1996, DiChiera devoted his full efforts to his mission of creating an opera house for Detroit. On Michigan Opera Theatre's twenty-fifth anniversary in April 1996, Joan Sutherland cut the ribbon for the grand opening of the Detroit Opera House, making MOT one of only a handful of American opera companies to own its home.

Throughout its history, Michigan Opera Theatre has been at the forefront of nurturing the careers of leading African-American artists. In his desire to present an opera representative of the local community, DiChiera commissioned Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison's opera *Margaret Garner*, an opera based on a fugitive slave story in pre-Civil War America, which became the first world premiere on the Detroit Opera House stage in 2005.

As a composer, DiChiera's music continues to receive critical acclaim. Among his works, *Four Sonnets*, with verses by Edna St. Vincent Millay for soprano and piano, premiered at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and has since been widely performed. In October 2007, his opera *Cyrano* received its world premiere at the Detroit Opera House and was later successfully presented by Opera Company of Philadelphia in 2009 and at Florida Grand Opera in 2011.

In October 2010, DiChiera was honored by the National Endowment for the Arts with their Opera Honors Award, our nation's highest award for lifetime achievement in opera. Most recently, Dr. DiChiera was named the 2013 Kresge Eminent Artist by The Kresge Foundation.

At the behest of the President of Italy, in 2016 DiChiera received the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic (Ordine al merito della Repubblica Italiana) in recognition of his "lifelong commitment to the dissemination of the Italian language and culture and his dynamic promotion of Italian opera through the world renowned Michigan Opera Theatre." The Order of Merit is the highest honor bestowed by Italy.





*I was not even 10 years old when I first met Dr. D. It would only be many years later that he would insist that I simply address him as “David”. Little did he know that my 8-year old self once came up to him to ask, quite nervously, what his favorite piano concerto was, only to realize it was the same as one of my favorites, the first piano concerto of Sergei Rachmaninoff. And little did I know that many years later I would find myself on stages playing that very concerto with orchestras, and that music would have completely taken over my life and become my sole passion and purpose.*

*Over the past years, I have had the fortune of repeatedly performing David DiChiera’s compositions in concert. Our relationship, composer to performer, mentor to mentee, and simply friend to friend, has been one of the great hon-*

*ors and privileges of my life. Knowing that most of his music has never been recorded in a studio, I sensed an opportunity to create a document that would reveal a completely different side of a man who contributed so much to the city of Detroit but at the core of whom still resided this incredible Artist-Composer.*

*Speaking with David, we decided to create this album featuring his music and empowering young artists, all while rooting it in the remarkable place that is Detroit.*

*Dear David - thank you for the inspiration and courage you have given me to bring this project to life.*

*Love always, Ivan Moshchuk*





## CREDITS

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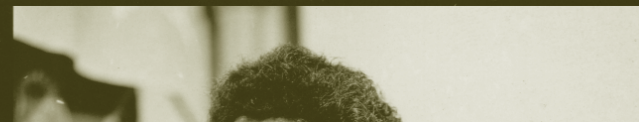
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KODAK SAFETY FILM





Handwritten musical score on aged, stained paper. The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The paper is heavily stained with large, irregular brown and orange spots, particularly concentrated in the center and right side. The handwriting is in black ink, and the overall appearance is that of a historical or antique manuscript.

*p. marmoreo*