

Jeanne-Minette Cilliers pianist

South African pianist Jeanne-Minette Cilliers has been called “a pianistic poet”, garnering rave reviews for her color-rich and imaginative performances. In demand as a collaborator, Ms. Cilliers has performed in Austria, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Israel, Japan, Sweden, South Africa, Barbados, and across North America. Ms. Cilliers fosters a strong interest in new music, and has presented several scores in world and North American premieres. She earned her Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees from the University of Michigan. She earned an Artist Diploma from Indiana University and remains the only recipient of an Artist Diploma in vocal accompanying from the Manhattan School of Music, where she is currently on the faculty. In the capacity of principal coach and pianist, she has been involved in Santa Fe Opera’s development of *Oscar*, a new opera by Theodore Morrison – a project she will see through to its premiere in 2013.

Eric Jurenas countertenor

Proclaimed as “the real deal,” and defined as having a “rich, mature voice,” with “incredible power,” American countertenor Eric Jurenas is quickly making a name for himself in both the opera and concert scene. After a brief stint as a baritone in his first year of university studies, he made the daunting switch to the opposite side of the vocal spectrum. Eric has worked with several groups as a featured soloist and , an avid competitor around the country and the world, Eric has won and received awards from several vocal competitions. He is currently pursuing a Masters at The Juilliard School. He received his Bachelors from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Eric will be covering David Daniels in the title role of the newly commissioned production, *Oscar*, with Santa Fe Opera in summer 2013. He will again cover Mr. Daniels in Opera Philadelphia’s production in 2015.

Jeffrey Gilliam speaking pianist

Since 1992, pianist Jeffrey Gilliam has been on the faculty at Western Washington University. His association with the late Lord Yehudi Menuhin led to collaborations with superb instrumentalists, with whom he has performed at London’s Wigmore Hall, The Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City, and in distinguished festivals worldwide. Mr. Gilliam studied piano at the Eastman School of Music, and at the University of Michigan. With a Fulbright Scholarship in piano and in German literature he studied in Cologne, Germany, where he made his European recital debut in 1982. Mr. Gilliam taught an accompanying course at The Juilliard School. He worked on the faculty of the International Menuhin Music Academy in Gstaad/Blonay, Switzerland for fourteen years and has recorded with violinists Yehudi Menuhin, Ruggerio Ricci, and Alberto Lysy.

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From the opera *Oscar*

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Eric Jurenas countertenor | **Jeanne-Minette Cilliers** pianist

Celebration of Silence · Two Minutes

De Profundis (1991)

For Speaking Pianist based on texts by Oscar Wilde (please see the text inside)

Frederic Rzewski (b1938 Massachusetts)

Jeffrey Gilliam speaking pianist

About **Oscar**, a world premiere at The Santa Fe Opera on July 27, 2013

Buzz has been building in anticipation of the world premiere of *Oscar*, composer Theodore Morrison’s opera based on the life of Oscar Wilde. Working with librettist John Cox, Morrison reveals the profoundly human side of the literary genius and aesthete. Oscar Wilde is still known mainly for his brilliant witticisms, for his hilariously satirical plays, and for “the love that dare not speak its name.” But his experiences at the hands of the English justice system transformed him into a champion of human and prisoners’ rights. The charismatic countertenor David Daniels has said “this role has the potential of being the highlight of my career.”

Performances on July 27, 31 and August 9, 12, 17. A limited number of tickets remain at SantaFeOpera.org

DE PROFUNDIS

De Profundis is a twenty-four-minute composition for piano solo, in which the pianist recites a text consisting of selected passages from Oscar Wilde's letter to Lord Alfred Douglas, written during the author's imprisonment in Reading. The piece could be described as an oratorio, in which eight sections with text are preceded by eight instrumental preludes. It was written in the summer of 1991 for the pianist Anthony de Mare, in memory of the actor Luke Theodore of the Living Theatre.

I believe this piece functions best when people are almost uncomfortably close to this classically trained musician who embarrassingly reveals himself to his audience, in a highly disciplined way. It's the kind of thing a good filmmaker might be interested in.

:: Frederic Rzewski

1 People point to Reading Gaol, and say, "That is where the artistic life leads a man." Well, it might lead to worse places. Mechanical people to whom life is a shrewd speculation depending on calculation always know where they are going, and go there. They start with the ideal desire of being the parish beadle, and they succeed in being the parish beadle and no more. A man whose desire is to be something separate from himself succeeds in being what he wants to be. That is his punishment. Those who want a mask have to wear it. But with the dynamic forces of life, it is different. People who desire self-realisation never know where they are going. They can't know. To recognize that the soul of a man is unknowable is the ultimate achievement of wisdom. The final mystery is oneself. When one has weighed the sun in the balance, and measured the steps of the moon, and mapped out the seven heavens, there still remains oneself. Who can calculate the orbit of his own soul?

2 We are the zanies of sorrow. We are clowns whose hearts are broken. We are specially designed to appeal to the sense of humour. On November 13th, 1895, I was brought down here from London. From two o'clock till half-past two on that day I had to stand on the centre platform of Clapham Junction in convict dress, and handcuffed, for the world to look at. When people saw me they laughed. Each train swelled the audience. Nothing could exceed their amusement. That was, of course, before they knew who I was. As soon as they had been informed they laughed still more. For half an hour I stood there in the grey November rain surrounding by a jeering mob. For a year I wept every day at the same hour and for the same space of time. In prison tears are a part of every day's experience. A day in prison on which one does not weep is a day on which one's heart is hard, not a day on which one's heart is happy.

3 Morality does not help me. I am a born antinomian. I am one of those who are made for exceptions, not for laws. Religion does not help me. The faith that others give to what is unseen, I give to what one can touch, and look at. Reason does not help me. It tells me that the laws under which I am convicted and the system under which I have suffered are wrong and unjust. But somehow, I have got to make both of these things just and right to me. I have got to make everything that has happened to me good for me. The plank bed, the loathsome food, the hard ropes, the harsh orders, the dreadful dress that makes sorrow grotesque to look at, the silence, the solitude, the shame--each and all of these things I had to transform into a spiritual experience. There is not a single degradation of the body which I must not try and make into a spiritualising of the soul.

4 I have no desire to complain. One of the many lessons that one learns in prison is, that things are what they are and will be what they will be. Suffering is one very long moment. We cannot divide it by seasons. We can only record its moods, and chronicle their return. With us time itself does not progress. It revolves. It seems to circle round one centre of pain. For us, there is only one season, the season of sorrow. The very sun and moon seem taken from us. Outside, the day may be blue and gold, but the light that creeps down through the thick glass of the small iron-barred window is grey. It is always twilight in one's cell, as it is always twilight in one's heart. And in the sphere of thought, no less than in the sphere of time, motion is no more.

5 We who live in prison, and in whose lives there is no event but sorrow, have to measure time by throbs of pain, and the record of bitter moments. We have nothing else to think of. Suffering is the means by which we exist, because it is the only means by which we become conscious of existing; and the remembrance of suffering in the past is necessary to us as the evidence of our continued identity. Between myself and the memory of joy lies a gulf no less deep than that between myself and joy in its actuality. So much in this place do men live by pain that my friendship with you, in the way in which I am forced to remember it, appears to me always as a prelude consonant with those varying modes of anguish which each day I have to realise; as though my life had been a symphony of sorrow, passing through its rhythmically linked movements to its certain resolution.

6 The memory of our friendship is the shadow that walks with me: that seems never to leave me: that wakes me up at night to tell the same story over and over: at dawn it begins again: it follows me into the prison yard and makes me talk to myself as I tramp round: each detail that accompanied each dreadful moment I am forced to recall: there is nothing that happened in those ill-starred years that I cannot recreate in that chamber of the brain which is set apart for grief or for despair: every strained note of your voice, every twitch and gesture of your nervous hands, every bitter word, every poisonous phrase comes back to me: I remember the street or river down which we passed: the wall or woodland that surrounded us, at what figure on the dial stood the hands of the clock, which way went the wings of the wind, the shape and colour of the moon.

(There is such a thing as leaving mankind alone; there is no such thing as governing mankind. All forms of government are failures.)

7 The gods are strange. It is not our vices only they make instruments to scourge us. They bring us to ruin through what in us is good, gentle, humane, loving. Love of some kind is the only possible explanation of the extraordinary amount of suffering that there is in the world. If the world has been built of sorrow, it has been built by the hands of love, because in no other way could the soul of man reach perfection. Far off, like a perfect pearl, one can see the City of God. It is so wonderful that it seems as if a child could reach it in a summer's day. And so a child could. But with me and such as me it is different. One can realise a thing in a single moment, but one loses it in the long hours that follow with leaden feet. We think in eternity, but we move slowly through time. And how slowly time goes with us who lie in prison I need not tell again.

8 I hope to live long enough and to produce work of such character that I shall be able at the end of my days to say, "Yes! this is just where the artistic life leads a man!" For the last seven or eight months, in spite of a succession of great troubles reaching me from the outside world almost without intermission, I have been placed in direct contact with a new spirit working in this prison through man and things, that has helped me beyond words: so that while for the first year of my imprisonment I did nothing else, and can remember doing nothing else, but wring my hands in despair, and say, "What an ending, what an appalling ending!" Now I try to say to myself, and sometimes when I am not torturing myself do really say, "What a beginning, what a wonderful beginning!"

:: Oscar Wilde