



THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Tapestry19

FEBRUARY 11-24, 2019

THE SAINT PAUL
CHAMBER
ORCHESTRA

Welcome to The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's Tapestry19 Festival!

We are extremely proud to present our first Tapestry Festival, which uses the language of music to explore issues faced by our community and invites members of our community to share their stories and lend their own voices to this exploration. At the center of the festival this season is a question: how do we recognize home? When posed to members of our community, this question had great resonance and provoked fascinating responses.

We commissioned incredible artists to respond to the question of home with new works. PaviElle M. French, Kinan Azmeh, Maya Miro Johnson and SPCO Composer-In-Residence Lembit Beecher embraced the spirit of this project and have given birth to four chamber orchestra pieces that receive their world premiere by the SPCO during the festival. Dancer and choreographer Ashwini Ramaswamy gives audiences a window into her creative process during an in-depth work-in-progress conversation, and in a Turf Club performance SPCO musicians share deeply personal performances of solo works that represent their musical home. Also, we partnered with poet Chris Santiago and ethnographer Todd Lawrence—both from the University of Saint Thomas, along with the American Swedish Institute's *Story Swap* Program, and the East Side Freedom Library to discuss the central question of this festival with several members of our community. You'll hear their responses and stories in Lembit Beecher's new piece, *Say Home*. The rich contributions of all participants form creative strands that are woven into Tapestry19.

Each artist has a story to tell that can be fully realized only in performance, but in order to complement the sonic realization of these stories, we have compiled this booklet for you to read and keep and delve more deeply into the theme of the festival, along with the content in the SPCO program book.

By bringing together these new creations and concerts in one festival, we hope to celebrate and challenge our concepts of home, and magnify the ability of music to engage our whole selves and our whole community.

Thank you and enjoy Tapestry19!

KYU-YOUNG KIM
SPCO Principal Violin and
Artistic Director

I was thrilled when the SPCO asked me to share my reflections on what home means to me and enjoyed joining several other members of our community in sharing our stories of home with composer Lembit Beecher for use in his piece *Say Home*, which will be premiered by the SPCO during the Tapestry19 Festival.

Saint Paul has always been my home and I love it here. Growing up, my family home was a loving and uplifting place, and it inspired in me a hope for all people to have the security, promise and wholeness of a good home.

100 years ago, my great-grandparents fled the deep south and came to Saint Paul looking for work, opportunities and a better future for their children. Never could they have imagined that our family would grow five generations (and counting) right here, or that one of their descendants would become Saint Paul's first African American mayor. Saint Paul and the broader Twin Cities have changed since my great-grandparents arrived. Our population has grown, by the numbers and in our rich cultural diversity. We are fortunate that we can dine on global cuisines, enjoy a wealth of arts and cultural experiences, and hear incredible performances by the world-renowned Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, right here in our community.

Thank you to the SPCO for shedding light on this important topic and for including so many voices from our Twin Cities community in the discussion.

MELVIN CARTER
Mayor, City of Saint Paul
Interviewee for Lembit Beecher's *Say Home*



Front cover: view from Kinan Azmeh's parents' kitchen window in Damascus; photo by Bachar Azmeh

Let the Crows Come

Work-in-progress conversation moderated by
Toni Pierce-Sands, TU Dance co-artistic director

Ashwini Ramaswamy, dancer/choreographer
Brent Arnold, cellist/composer
Alanna Morris-Van Tassel, dancer
Berit Ahlgren, dancer
Commissioned by the SPCO's Liquid Music Series

Parkway Theater
FEBRUARY 11, 2019

As an Indian woman born in the U.S., I am constantly navigating the ambiguities of straddling two cultures/homes. Home can feel both vast and intimate: there are buildings that provide a concrete home to our physical bodies, and emotions that construct intangible homes within the halls of memory.

I feel home around the south Indian food my mother cooks. I feel home during Bharatanatyam* class with my legendary guru in India, where I am reminded of my smallness within such a vast art form. And I feel home when dancing—on stage in front of hundreds or on my own. As a cultural carrier, I convey my history and traditions through Bharatanatyam, physically transmitting my perceptions of homeland through movement.

I remember being in third grade and coming to school the day after *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* aired on television. That film, set in India, portrays Indians as barbarians who eat monkey brains. A fellow student loudly asked me if that is what my family eats for dinner.

I was humiliated, and I wished I could be normal like everyone else. There were countless moments like that growing up as one of the only people of color in school: why did I have to be from another country? in which of these places did I belong?

I have since come to understand that all of us exist within multiple cultural planes, regardless of race or generation. I believe that artists have a unique ability to cohere personal truth with imagination, and the capacity to highlight the interconnectedness of humanity. My upbringing in both India and the United States has established a hybrid internal compass, and my artistic partnership with my mother and sister has created a situation where tradition and innovation exist simultaneously. For me, family, art and home are interchangeable words.

ASHWINI RAMASWAMY
dancer/choreographer

A form of classical Indian dance, Bharatanatyam is a dynamic physical expression that has evolved over millennia through its practitioners. Though a culturally specific art form, Bharatanatyam is a universal language that can convey both the spiritual and the secular through the body.



Let the Crows Come is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Let the Crows Come was developed in residence at the Baryshnikov Arts Center.

Pictured left to right: Ashwini, Abarra and Ramee Ramaswamy

A Requiem for Zula in Seven Movements

Commissioned by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
Composed by PaviElla M. French
Orchestrated by Michi Wiancko

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME
Ordway Concert Hall and Benson Great Hall
FEBRUARY 15, 16 & 17, 2019



My mother created home by giving me a life surrounded by love, education, music and community. And so much more. Albeit, the home where my mother lived, where she cultivated us, where her gardens were, now is home to another family. The neighborhood is changing and being gentrified; it is hard that not only she is gone, but what I have known my whole life is disappearing. It makes me feel like a nomad, carrying home in my heart. But I am rooted, because I am rooted in the lessons that she and the community instilled in me.

I had a special kind of relationship with my mother, built upon honesty, and without judgment. She loved my family, brother, Ahanti and me wholly, holistically. She broke cycles that were detrimental to growth and wasn't afraid to ask for what she needed for herself or her family. She was my first advocate, who would even reach out to others in the community and ask that they pour lessons into me.

Mama Z was an example (to me) that people can change the world around them and make a life that you want to see. She was a founding member of SAGE Community Gardens, in which she taught the youth and fellow neighbors how to cultivate the land. She showed me what love is. She touched, taught and raised up multiple generations of Saint Paul people. I love her for everything she was and wasn't. I can't measure how much I respect and appreciate her entire humanity and existence. So, I wrote her this symphony. This is her song.

It has been eight years since I lost both my parents, and I thank the Rondo community for supporting my art and helping me come back to normal and wake up. I would not have been able to heal without this community. I am their child, a child of Rondo.

PAVIELLE M. FRENCH
composer



AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM

A Requiem for Zula by PaviElla Marissa French is made possible by a grant from the American Composers Forum with funds provided by the Jerome Foundation.

A Requiem for Zula (2018)
by Pavielle M. French

Oh, I miss you Mama

Z Was the epitome of what a pure heart can bring to a community.
But, she was taken from us.
The good die Young.
Life feels rushed when you're out of time.

Yeah.

Brown like the earth.
Bright as the sun.
Her beautiful smile touched everyone.
I honor her with these words of my song...

Her name was Zula, Sweet Z.
Zula.

Her name was Zula, Mama.
Zula.

There were so many things that were left unsaid.
But I'mma tell 'em anyway...
Because I know that you hear it when I say.

I love ya.
And, I'm paying homage to your legacy.
Can I get a witness?
Let me testify for Z.

She was classy!
Her Spirit, electrifying!
She could see right through your soul without even trying!
She's a healer, she's my hero!
She's still here!

She ran track like Flo Jo.
Couldn't pursue it cause her Mama told her no.
Instead she raised up her siblings,
And then had to raise her own children.
She looked at this life full glass,
Broke cycles that were presented to her in the past.
Educator. Cultivator. Open heart. Open hands...
To bestow upon her children the life she never had.

How could something like this...happen?
Stage Four Diagnosis...cancer?
To a woman...so sweet!
Nobody deserves this disease...

(Spoken)
Can you imagine?
Living on borrowed time.
Counting down the clock.
What it does to your mind.
I remember waking up.
And, finding my mother gone.
She waited til we were asleep.
And took her journey home.

I cannot withstand this no longer.
How could you now take my Mama?
Five months ago, buried my Father...
Complete with military honors.
Left with a flag and some objects.
In deep malaise, I don't bother...
With anyone, any farther.
Just want to leave by tomorrow...
Everything I have known...
Is all gone.

It's so cold...
Without the warmth of your light.
I've never felt such emptiness in my life.
And, I'm...just...so...numb.
What is living if YOU'RE not here??
I'm struggling to find the reasons ma 'dear.

And, she answered me:

"I'm with you, always remember.
And, to the truth just surrender.
For I had to birth a new life and the time to deliver was nigh.
Your life doesn't stop, when I die..."

...I know Mama, but it's hard at times...being here.
I had to remove myself...feelings neglected...
Need to heal and accept it!

Mama...wake up...Mama.
Please...wake up...Mama.

Trauma is a serial killer.
I'm fighting back. I'mma come out a winner.
She wanted much for me and I'm indebted to her to get free.
She crossed over into the source.
She's leading me on my daily course.
And, maybe I can live again.
Even though I can't see you, by my side you are standin!

Sitting alone on this water.
Thinking of my Mother's Daughter.
Wondering when she'll come back to her truth.

Mama...

Go into the light...

I refuse to...

Let you go...

How selfish of me...

I don't know how to say goodbye.

I'm not ready...

To grow up right now...

There's so much...

That I need you to tell me...

I know it's time...

I KNOW ITS TIME...

But, I fear...

The unknown.

I'm...

All...

Alone.

(Spoken)
And then, I broke out!
I left for Hawaii...
I felt like Dorothy after the tornado...
My grey world turned to technicolor.
I could see myself!
In the reflection of that water...
Channels opened for me...
I began to hear my Mother's voice speak...

I'm forced to look at reality.
I tried giving up on me. My passion, my dreams.
But, she won't...
Allow me to drown in apathy.
It's crazy.
She's still mothering me and her son, from another realm.
And, she won't go unheard, she's showing me...
Things I don't wanna see.

But, I have to face it now...she said,

Mom: "Go back home. Do music. Go back home."
Me: Not yet, not time.

Mom: "Go back home. Do music. Go back home."
Me: Go back home. Do music!

I'm NOT ready. There's too many memories. There's too many people, places and things that remind me of a life I ain't never getting back. But, it's getting louder in my head...Go back home, do music, go back home, do music, go back home...Okay!

I'm back in Minnesota...
Nice, it's killing me inside.
I look happy but, I'm not!
Please help me, I'm struggling...
Pretender...
Faking til I make it.
And, then she put me in the right place, right time...
So, I can help others
That are in pain like me!

We're pushing forward.
Getting better and we're cherishing the lives we live.
Finding new trajectories and doing something different.
Even though my Mom ain't here and it's tearing me up inside,
Mourning is a normal thing, I know that I will be alright.

So, it may be sad if you miss somebody.
But, it's okay if you miss somebody.
It's understandable to miss somebody in your life who loved you unconditionally.

So now I'm back.
Back in Minnesota...
Working on my best life,
Shining brightly for the world to see that you can step outside of your fears.

And, that's what my Mama taught
Us, we control our own destiny,
And what we want to bring forth we have to be willing to carry.

So, it may be sad if you miss somebody.
So, put your hands up, if you miss somebody.
It's understandable to miss somebody in your life who loved you unconditionally.

It seems, we've come to the end.
This is truly bittersweet, my friends.
But, I'm blessed to honor this woman...
To whom so much, she meant.

I thank her for her grace and the way she didn't judge.
The sacrifices she didn't hesitate to make for us.
I pray she really knew the magnitude...of who she was.

Save a space for me...
When I get free...
You're the first I want to see...
Save a space for me.

I'll never get over that you're gone.
But, I can learn from you and spread your love on...
This world, through your memory.
And, what you've invested in me.

I thank her for her grace and for how she loved.
For her resiliency and never giving up.
I commend her patience, trust, candor and thoughts.

Save a place for me...
When I get free...
You're the first I want to see...
Save a place for me.

...When I get there!

For I know, music was your heart so, I wrote you a symphony.

This one's for...

Z

Don't Rip Eat After Me

for Clarinet, Chamber Orchestra, Electronics & Video

Commissioned by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
Composed by Kinan Azmeh

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

Ordway Concert Hall and Benson Great Hall

FEBRUARY 15, 16 & 17, 2019



For many people, home is the place they grow up in, a place where they have their memories, extended family and friends. For others, home is simply the place where one is most comfortable. I personally believe that home is simply the place you want to contribute to without having to justify it.

Jisreen is a village outside Damascus where my grandparents own a little piece of land. One of my earliest memories of feeling "at home" was me watering the apricot and plum trees and working with the soil; these trees were only a few years younger than I am and I saw them grow. I believe that it was there where I developed my most meaningful sense of what home is.

I certainly enjoy being the New Yorker in Damascus and the Damascene in New York, but I don't think about it much. The meaning of home for me is more about meaningful interaction and contribution, and less about nostalgia. When I moved to New York in 2001, I knew that I did not want to become an expatriate; I tried to keep an active connection with Syria as much as I could, which meant traveling there a few times a year to play and teach and to simply continue to be part of the local music community. Damascus is my hometown and New York is this other home that I have been discovering for the last 18 years. I don't see any contradiction here, as I believe that the concepts of home and identity both continue to expand and naturally become more all-inclusive as our experiences grow. I truly believe that the more we feel at home in a variety of places, the richer our lives can be.

KINAN AZMEH
clarinet, composer



Photo still from film by Alfoz Tanjour



Photo still from film by Khalil Younes

Nyumbani (2018)

Commissioned by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
by Christopher Santiago

1

Close: closely.

The place
where something began
& flourished. The abode
of a human being, their place of residence.
The house or structure in which one lives especially *la casa* with *su familia*.
A place of refuge & rest.

2

Asylum.

Hem.

Swedish for *hjem* *hauv tsev* *thípi.*

The place

or country in which one dwells.

3

Also one's birthplace

one's native land.

Guriga.

집

Nhà.

Heim.

住居

The place where one's ancestors dwell:

Oslo. Laos. Rondo.

Phillips.

Oaxaca.

Seoul.

4

The locality where a thing is usually found.

Where it was first found. Where it is naturally
abundant.

Bahay.

End point.

Goal.

As in games,

graves.

As in

the arrow struck home.

He failed to touch home.

As in your place or mine?

The abiding place of the affections.

5

In Ojibwe, not a noun, but an adverb.

Adverb: expressing a relation of place, time, circumstance.

giiwewidoon: to carry home

To go home mad: *giiwegidaazo.*

To run home

To wade home

giuweba'iwe

giiweyaadagaazii

gliwenaazha': tell to go

home

6

Not foreign. As in home goods, home

made. Old English *gehānian* becomes German:

heim

unheimlich: uncanny

A foreign tongue heard on home soil.

7

Say

you're having lunch with your husband & friends. Say you
snicker / gossip / throw shade. Say all this
goes down in Swahili.

In the next booth is a woman.

She doesn't care for it, the sound

of your language. She says she doesn't

like that she doesn't know

what you're saying.

You keep laughing

even as she gets up, roundhouses

a two-pound glass mug

into your face.

Say home: *nyumbani*. As in *why don't you*

go back home. As in *your words*

hit home.

8

The place where you are stationed and from which missions begin & end.

In games, in warfare.

To return home accurately from a long distance.

Like a crow.

Like a pigeon.

I'll have you home in no time.

To go home by boat: *giuwe'o.*

Don't forget

to write home.

wherever you go, there you are

Commissioned by The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
Composed by Maya Miro Johnson

REFLECTIONS ON HOME
Ordway Concert Hall
FEBRUARY 22, 23 & 24, 2019

Home can be many things: something sought or escaped, warm or smothering, tranquil or chaotic, comforting or hyper-vigilant. Yet, no matter what positivity or negativity people associate with their childhood and adult homes, everyone, regardless of language or culture, can understand that the ideal of home is almost sacred.

My own perception of home also has been changeable. I recently experienced a homesickness which didn't fade with the prognosis of time or return. I realize now this *heimweh* stemmed from an insecurity, a fear of the unknown. At this strange transitional age, on the cusp of adulthood (apparently my frontal lobe has a daunting seven more years of gestation!), one experiences a discomfort in one's own skin which is the ultimate existential homelessness.

But self-doubt is simply the fear of not finding a new home for oneself. I believe that everyone experiences this trepidation at some point, and not just in youth. The antidote is remembering that home is where the heart is, not the epidermis. For me, the Buddhist saying "wherever you go, there you are" means we must all strive to be at home simply in ourselves, since a skin-deep home is not really one at all.

SCENES OF HOME

Murmur of a thousand uncoordinated voices. Gradual quiet which seems sudden in retrospect. Applause. Footsteps, confident despite the exposure of the sudden silence. A single note blossoms into a cacophony of branches, some foliated, some bare: one voice becoming many, then receding into the distance of the recent past and the near future. The air sharpens, fingers tighten. A breath. We begin our communion, giving thanks for this, our daily bread.

MAYA MIRO JOHNSON
composer

SPCO at Turf Club

FEBRUARY 12, 2019



"Home is where the heart is." I learned this classic line from a framed cross-stitching in my childhood home. But where is my heart? That is less simple—each person I have ever loved, each place I have lived, retains a piece of my heart. A newly married man, my wife Chia-Hsuan has quickly become a huge part of my idea of home. As a kid, I remember my mother explaining that our home is to be a safe place in a scary world. And I think of a German lesson where my teacher was trying to explain the word "gemütlich" to us Americans, describing it as being comfy or cozy, like reclining by a fire in your living room with the feeling that all is right in the world.

I was raised in Georgia until I was 17, moved to Germany with my family for my dad's job before my senior year

in high school, and went to college (Juilliard) in NYC. It was in NYC that I always felt an asterisk attached to my answer of where my home was. No answer felt complete. Is it where I lived 95% of my life, where my family was or where I was now invested? With all this in mind, I think of home as a place where I am more childlike—my love is full and trusting, my personality is more genuine and uninhibited, yet without selfish ambition or a need to prove myself. I can rest and recharge. I am unconditionally loved, accepted, and safe, and most importantly, I'm with the people I care about most. In a word, heaven.

JAMES FERREE
SPCO Principal Horn

THE SAINT PAUL CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Tapestry19

LET THE CROWS COME

SPCO Liquid Music Series

February 11, 2019

Parkway Theater, Minneapolis, MN

SPCO AT TURF CLUB

February 12, 2019

Turf Club, Saint Paul, MN

SONGS MY MOTHER TAUGHT ME

February 15, 16 & 17, 2019

Ordway Concert Hall Saint Paul, MN

Benson Great Hall, Arden Hills, MN

REFLECTIONS ON HOME

February 22, 23 & 24, 2019

Ordway Concert Hall, Saint Paul, MN

THANK YOU!

We extend our warmest thanks to the following donors for their generous support of the Tapestry19 Festival.



Tapestry 19 is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Amphion Foundation

Aaron Copland Fund for Music

Amy L. Hubbard and Geoffrey J. Kehoe Fund



Let the Crows Come is made possible by the New England Foundation for the Arts' National Dance Project, with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.



The Residency of Lembit Beecher is made possible through Music Alive, a residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA. wherever you go, there you are and Don't Rip/Eat After Me also were made possible by a Music Alive grant. This national program is designed to provide orchestras with resources and tools to support their work with composers and new music, capitalizing on the power of composers and their creativity to build new paths for orchestras to heighten their relevancy and deepen their relationships with their communities. Major funding for Music Alive comes from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, The ASCAP Foundation Bart Howard Fund, the Francis Golet Charitable Lead Trusts and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Say Home is made possible in part through the support of Jack and Linda Hoeshler and Fred and Gloria Sewell.

A Requiem for Zula by Pavielle Marissa French is made possible by a grant from the American Composers Forum with funds provided by the Jerome Foundation.

Background: Lembit Beecher's notes and charts for Say Home