

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

*presents*

FACULTY COMPOSITION RECITAL

Justin Merritt  
Henry Dorn

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2023 • STUDIO A • 8:15 P.M.

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**PROGRAM**

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**Psalm Rounds**

Justin Merritt (b. 1975)

Tracey Engleman, *soprano*  
Shari Speer, *soprano*  
Marita Stryker, *mezzo-soprano*

KrisAnne Weiss, *mezzo-soprano*  
Dan Dressen, *tenor*  
Emery Stephens Jr., *tenor*

**Voices**

Henry Dorn (b. 1988)

Jake Dreifort '24, *trombone*  
Leo Barks '27, *trombone*

Jacques LeMay '26, *trombone*  
Vincent Cianchetti '26, *bass trombone*

**On the Consolations of Bourgeois Life**

Justin Merritt

Kittens at Play  
Fireflies  
The Geography of My Weekdays  
Insisting  
Grandma

Alan Dunbar '99, *baritone*  
Lori Folland, *piano*

**Sonata for Soprano Saxophone and Piano**

Henry Dorn

Nathan Salazar, *saxophone*  
Kathryn Ananda-Owens, *piano*

**God Hears Each Word (2023)**

Justin Merritt

**Joseph, Joseph (2023)**

**My Faith is a Weapon (2023)**

Tracey Engleman, *soprano*  
Shari Speer, *soprano*  
Marita Stryker, *mezzo-soprano*  
KrisAnne Weiss, *mezzo-soprano*  
Jaclyn Duellman '25, *alto*  
Dan Dressen, *tenor*

Emery Stephens Jr., *tenor*  
Chris Brunelle, *bass*  
Noah Carlson '26, *bass*  
Andrew Kramer '26, *bass*  
Adam Reinwald *bass*  
James Bobb, *organ*

*Unauthorized photography or video and audio recording is prohibited.  
Please silence cell phones.*

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## TEXTS

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### **Psalm Rounds (2023)**

I give thanks to you, O Lord. All the kings of the earth will praise you.  
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life.

*–Psalm 138 (KJV translation)*

Lord, I will wait for you; you will answer, Lord my God.

*–Psalm 38*

I waited patiently for the Lord. He drew me up from the pit.

*–Psalm 40*

Blessed is the man who does not walk with the wicked.

*–Psalm 1*

Do not be envious of evil doers, for they will fade like grass.

*–Psalm 37*

I lift my eyes to the hills; help comes from the Lord.

*–Psalm 121*

Praise the Lord! For great is his love.

*–Psalm 117*

### **On the Consolations of Bourgeois Life (2023)**

#### **Kittens at Play**

You take me where,  
The river spills into the Inland Sea,  
Where Òmi and I,  
Saw the fireflies,  
That would not let us be.

They are not so pleasant to hear,  
As the sound of your breathing,  
Your breath on my face.

Better than the sky,  
Is a humble roof with love and you.  
The only beauty which can be sung,  
Is far less than the song itself.  
“You are afraid of me.”

Beauty is the least of things,  
Less than the short-lived mushroom,  
Less than the smoke of summer weeds,  
And you have seen a moment,  
You have seen a moment.

You buried your head in my hair,  
You wailed like a little child,  
And laughed a little too much.

Like two kittens at play,  
Sometimes one gets too rough,  
And the other exits,  
Tail high in the air,  
Too proud to admit how much it hurt.

### **Fireflies**

We sat against the door and caught fireflies  
in a jar on the porch.  
Playing in the mud after a summer storm,  
And riding bikes around the block,  
The smell of fresh cut grass.

I would rather know these things,  
Than to remember that men  
walked on the face of the moon.

The delicate loveliness of a frosted landscape,  
Peered at in wonder through a picture window,  
Looks altogether different through fogged up glasses,  
Huffing and puffing to shovel the driveway in time for work.

My wife wipes her hands on her apron,  
Body firm but soft in her cotton dress.  
She tilts her head and pretends to sulk,  
And she scolds me for being late again.

### **The Geography of My Weekdays**

In the dark, there is a pale blue light,  
That comes to life before me,  
And all within it,  
Is bright and clean.

And in my hands,  
The keyboard's 1234567890,  
Or was it qwertyuiop?

Heartbroken, I issue the death decree:  
Control-Alter-Delete

My fingers trip in a tangle of wires,  
Scattered across my desk,  
Hard drives and headphones and old coffee cups,  
Are the geography of my weekdays.

### **Insisting**

The cold wind of evening rises,  
Shivering the wet leaves.  
While the voices of the earth and the skies tremble,  
Come up to our ears,  
Up as they seem.  
That the grass is the color that it seems,  
And the sky is the color that it seems.

There are a thousand points of beauty that I love  
In the garden, among falling shadows.

The trees will be black,  
Like jagged teeth, against the sky.  
And silence will sink  
Down like leaves,  
Insisting that I lie down beside it.

### **Grandma**

Grandma never gave recipes in cups or teaspoons,  
She would only say, "Just a bit more" or "About yea much."  
She didn't say a word when Aaron and I,  
Ran through the spare bedroom,  
And her rising rolls fell.  
Mom would shake her head and laugh and laugh,  
"That would have earned a spanking when Grandma was my age."

Bread is made from seeds and fungus,  
But histories are made from love.

Grandma is frail now,  
Her white hair is neatly combed and gathered in a bun,  
Hardly the same woman in the black and white photo,  
Laughing at herself wearing pants,  
Kicking up dust and dirt,  
Grandpa, long since passed,  
Shaking his head and laughing at her boldness.

She cries a little when you get up to go,  
Knowing it could be the last time.  
You thought you were the only one,  
Who knows what this day means,  
But when you come to her she wipes her eye,  
And her voice is steady and strong.

*-Justin Merritt & GPT-3 and -4*