



presents

**STEPHANIE BLYTHE**, mezzo-soprano  
**WARREN JONES**, piano

Thursday, October 13, 2011, 8pm  
Herbst Theatre

**JAMES LEGG**

**Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson**

*There's been a Death, in the Opposite House  
This is my letter to the World  
I'm Nobody! who are you?  
It dropped so low—in my Regard  
Bee! I'm expecting you!  
I had no tie to Hate  
I'll tell you how the Sun rose  
The Way I read a Letter's this  
I felt a Cleaving in my Mind  
I meant to find Her when I came  
Success is counted sweetest  
'Tis not that Dying hurts us so*

**SAMUEL BARBER**

**Three Songs, Op. 10**

*Rain Has Fallen  
Sleep Now  
I Hear an Army*

INTERMISSION

**Songs from Tin Pan Alley**

JOPLIN	Peacherine Rag
STERLING and VON TILZER	Coax Me
HERBERT and MacDONOUGH	Ask Her While the Band is Playing
HENDERSON, BROWN and DeSYLVA	If I had a Talking Picture of You
CREAMER and TLAYTON	After You've Gone
JOPLIN	Magnetic Rag
BERLIN	If you Don't Want my Peaches
	You'd be Surprised
	What'll I Do?
	I Love a Piano

Ms. Blythe is represented by Opus 3 Artists, 470 Park Avenue South, 9th Floor North, New York, NY 10016 info@opus3artists.com

Hamburg Steinway Model D, Pro Piano San Francisco

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Photo: Kohle van Rensburg

**Artist Profiles**

San Francisco Performances presents Stephanie Blythe for the second time; in 2009, she appeared as a resident artist with The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Warren Jones has performed extensively with SF Performances since 1985.

**Stephanie Blythe**

Mezzo-soprano **Stephanie Blythe** is considered to be one of the most highly respected and critically acclaimed artists of her generation.

Ms. Blythe has sung in many of the renowned opera houses in the U.S. and Europe including the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Seattle Opera, Royal Opera House Covent Garden and the Opera National de Paris. Her many roles include the title roles in *Carmen*, *Samson et Dalila*, *Orfeo ed Euridice*, *L'italiana in Algeri*, *La Grande Duchesse*, *Tancredi*, *Mignon* and *Giulio Cesare*; Frugola, Principessa, and Zita in *Il Trittico*, Fricka in *Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*, Waltraute in *Götterdämmerung*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Ulrica in *Un Ballo in Maschera*, Baba the Turk in *The Rake's Progress*, Ježibaba in *Rusalka*, Jocasta in *Oedipus Rex*, Mère Marie in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Mistress Quickly in *Falstaff*, Ino/Juno in *Semele* and Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*.

Ms. Blythe has also appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Opera Orchestra of New York, Minnesota Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Ensemble Orchestre de Paris and the Concertgebouwwork-est. She has also appeared at the Tanglewood, Cincinnati May, and Ravinia festivals and at the BBC Proms. The many conductors with whom she has worked include Harry Bicket, James Conlon, Charles Dutoit, Mark Elder, Christoph Eschenbach, James Levine, Nicola Luisotti, Sir Charles Mackerras, John Nelson, Antonio Pappano, Mstislav Rostropovitch, Robert Spano, Patrick Summers and Michael Tilson Thomas.

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2012 Season: Jan. 27-May 6



María Kochetkova and Jaime García Castilla in McGregor's *Chroma* © Erik Tomasson

A frequent recitalist, Ms. Blythe has been presented in recital in New York by Zankel Hall, Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series at Alice Tully Hall and its American Songbook Series at the Allen Room, the 92nd Street Y, Town Hall and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She has also been presented by the Vocal Arts Society and at the Supreme Court at the invitation of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg in Washington, DC, the Cleveland Art Song Festival, the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society and Shriver Hall in Baltimore.

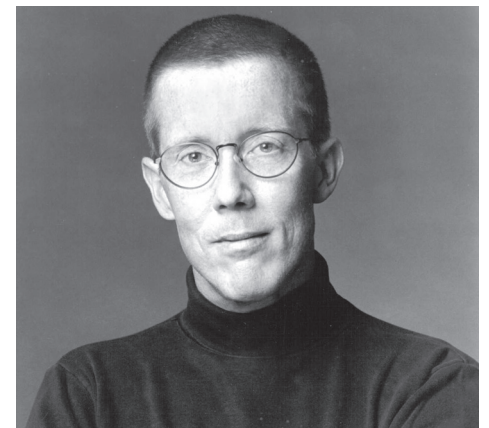
A champion of American song, she recently premiered *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* by the late James Legg, in Town Hall. She also premiered *Vignettes: Ellis Island*, a song cycle written especially for her by Alan Smith which was featured in a special television program entitled *Vignettes: An Evening with Stephanie Blythe and Warren Jones*. Her most recent collaboration with Mr. Smith was *Covered Wagon Woman*, a piece commissioned for Ms. Blythe's residency with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and recorded with the ensemble on its own label, CMS Studio Recordings.

Ms. Blythe starred in the Metropolitan Opera's live HD broadcasts of *Orfeo ed Euridice* and *Il Trittico*. Her recordings of works by Mahler, Brahms, and Wagner and of arias by Handel and Bach are available on the Virgin Classics label.

This season, Ms. Blythe returns to the Metropolitan Opera for *Rodelinda*, *Aida* and the complete Ring Cycle, and appears with the New York Philharmonic and with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra at Cal Performances. She also makes her debut at the Deutsche Oper Berlin in concert performances of *Il Trovatore*.

Ms. Blythe was named Musical America's Vocalist of the Year for 2009. Her other awards include the 2007 Opera News Award and the 1999 Richard Tucker Award.

## Warren Jones



Warren Jones recently received the 2011 "Achievement Award" from the Music Teachers

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National Association of America—their highest honor. He was also named as “Collaborative Pianist of the Year” in 2010 by the publication *Musical America*, and in the same year received an Honorary Doctorate from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Mr. Jones performs regularly with many of today’s best-known artists, including Stephanie Blythe, Denyce Graves, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Anthony Dean Griffey, Bo Skovhus, John Relyea, Joseph Alessi, and Richard “Yongjae” O’Neill. He is the Principal Pianist for the exciting and innovative Southern California chamber music group Camerata Pacifica. In the past he has partnered such great performers as Marilyn Horne, Samuel Ramey, Håkan Hagegård, Kathleen Battle, Barbara Bonney, Carol Vaness, Judith Blegen, Tatiana Troyanos and Martti Talvela and performed with the Juilliard, Borromeo and Brentano Quartets. His collaborations have earned consistently high praise from many publications: *The Boston Globe* termed him “flawless” and “utterly ravishing” and *The New York Times*, “exquisite”.

Mr. Jones has often been a guest artist at Carnegie Hall and in Lincoln Center’s “Great Performers Series” as well as the American summer festivals at Tanglewood, Ravinia and Caramoor. Internationally he has appeared at every major venue in Europe, South America, Japan, Korea and in Hong Kong. Mr. Jones has been invited three times to the White House by American presidents to perform at concerts honoring the President of Russia and Prime Ministers of Italy and Canada—three times he has appeared at the U.S. Supreme Court as a specially invited performer for the Justices and their guests.

In 2011 Mr. Jones returns to the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center for performances with Russian soprano Dina Kuznetsova and members of the Society. At Carnegie Hall, Mr. Jones participates often in Professional Training Workshops for young musicians as part of the Weill Education Institute. He has conducted sold-out, critically-acclaimed performances of Mascagni’s *Lamico Fritz* with the Merola Opera Program at San Francisco Opera and Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* at the Music Academy of the West.

Mr. Jones’ discography includes 29 recordings; he can be heard on every major record label, in diverse repertory from Schubert and Brahms to more esoteric compositions of Gretchaninoff, Clarke and Smit, as well as contemporary works by Harbison and others.

Mr. Jones is a member of the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City, and each summer he teaches and performs at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California. For ten years he was Assistant Conductor at the Metropolitan Opera and for

three seasons served in the same capacity at San Francisco Opera. Mr. Jones is also a prominent musical jurist, having been a judge for the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, the Walter Naumburg Foundation Awards and the Metropolitan Opera Auditions.

Born in Washington, D.C., Mr. Jones grew up in North Carolina and graduated with honors from the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston, MA where he currently serves on the Board of Visitors. A resident of New York City, Mr. Jones enjoys cooking, exercise, historical novels, and lively political discussion. Please visit [warrenjones.com](http://warrenjones.com) for a full listing of his recordings and itinerary.

## Program Notes

### Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

#### JAMES LEGG

Born February 20, 1962, Levittown, NY  
Died November 20, 2000, New York City

If the cliché has validity that the good die young, the same cannot be said for the deservedly famous. In the case of James Legg, educated at the Juilliard School, who continued his education at the Eastman School and Duke, and whose classmates included both Dawn Upshaw and Renée Fleming, he was only at the beginning of what was an extremely promising career when his life was cut short. He had been awarded a Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music as well as an M.A. from Duke University.

His many awards include three BMI music awards, a Fulbright Hayes grant for study in Italy with Hans Werner Henze, a National Institute for Music Theater grant for an internship with Thea Musgrave and the Virginia Opera Association, as well as the Charles Ives Prize from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

He wrote six one-act operas for the stage, one of which was commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera as well as the film scores for several feature films, including *Dirty Laundry*, starring Tess Harper and *A Texas Funeral* starring Martin Sheen. Mr. Legg had just obtained the rights from Arthur Miller to begin work on an operatic version of *All My Sons*, left uncompleted by his untimely death. His final completed works, however, were the *Twelve Songs of Emily Dickinson* which he wrote specifically for Stephanie Blythe, and which she has so generously championed in recent recitals.

—Jack O’Brien

Emily Dickinson has become one of the most famous American poets, which is ironic,

given the fact that she was virtually unknown during her lifetime. Dickinson was one of the most reclusive figures in history, a woman who spent the final twenty-five years of her relatively brief life in an upstairs room in a house in Northampton, Massachusetts, from which—walled off from almost all human contact and outside experience—she wrote over 1700 short poems (of which six had been published—anonously—at the time of her death). Yet there is something powerful and life-aware in the poetry of this woman who seemed to the outside world entirely disconnected from life. Not surprisingly, that poetry—full of rhythmic quirks and a sharp ear for language—has attracted a number of composers: Carter, Bolcom, Perle, Hoiby, Persichetti, and many, many others have set her poems, either individually or in cycles. By far the best-known of these is Aaron Copland’s *Twelve Songs on Poems of Emily Dickinson*, composed in 1950. Legg also chose to set twelve of Dickinson’s poems, but he took care to set none of those that Copland had used.

Following Mr. Legg’s death, his partner, the renowned stage director Jack O’Brien, presented the songs to Stephanie Blythe. She gave the first public performance of these songs in New York City in June 2010 and continues to present them in her recitals.

—Program Notes by Eric Bromberger

### Three Songs, Opus 10

*Rain Has Fallen*

*Sleep Now*

*I Hear an Army*

#### SAMUEL BARBER

Born March 9, 1910, West Chester, PA  
Died January 23, 1981, New York City

Rarely has so young a composer worked at so high a level as Samuel Barber did in the years immediately following his graduation from the Curtis Institute in 1932. Over the decade of the 1930s—while still in his twenties—he wrote his *Cello Sonata*, *Music for a Scene from Shelley*, *First Symphony*, *Adagio for Strings*, *First Essay for Orchestra* and the *Violin Concerto*, all of them still very much a part of the repertory. It was right in the middle of this period—1935–36 and while living in Europe on a Pulitzer Traveling Scholarship and a Rome Prize—that Barber wrote his *Three Songs, Opus 10*.

These three songs set texts drawn from James Joyce’s first published work, *Chamber Music*, a volume of love-lyrics that appeared in 1907. Joyce himself was a keen enthusiast for music, and a number of composers have set

poems from this volume. The first two songs are lyric and gentle, but the last, "I hear an army", is animated and assaultive. Marked *Allegro con fuoco*, it rings with the sound of military fanfares and its despondent close makes this song a sort of nightmare reversal of Barber's 1933 setting of Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach*.

## American Popular Music, One Century Ago

The second half of this all-American recital offers a selection of popular music composed in the early years of the twentieth century. A generic description of such music often refers to it as the product of Tin Pan Alley, and many people are happy to use that term without knowing quite what it means. Strictly speaking, Tin Pan Alley refers to the collection of music publishers and songwriters who were based in lower Manhattan—largely around 28th Street—during the final years of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth. This was a period of musical ferment in America: Jazz, blues, ragtime, and other forms of music were entering the mainstream, and many American households had a piano and performers ready to play and sing popular music of the era. There was a market for songs and piano pieces, whether they were intended for Broadway shows or for domestic consumption, and Tin Pan Alley produced a huge amount of very good music, as the second half of this recital will show. It offers two piano pieces and eight songs, all created by men who were born in the nineteenth century and died in the twentieth. This music may be a century old, but it has lost little of its charm.

Scott Joplin is today regarded as one of America's great composers, but that news would have come as a surprise to Joplin himself, who died in poverty, disease and misery at the age of 50. The son of a former slave, Joplin grew up in Texas and learned to play the piano as a boy. He was solidly grounded in European classical music, and to this he brought the experience of African-American music. Joplin performed throughout the South as a young man, but it was his appearance at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 that brought him and ragtime music to national prominence: across the 1890s and 1900s, a vogue for ragtime swept the country, and Joplin wrote and published a number of very popular piano

pieces, including the piece that made his reputation, the *Maple Leaf Rag*. But Joplin was not good at managing money, his long effort to mount his opera *Treemonisha* met with failure, and Joplin's name and music essentially vanished in the years after his death in 1917. A half-century after his death, a number of musicians were aware of Joplin and performed his music, but it was the use of that music in the 1973 movie *The Sting* that brought Joplin back to national fame, and he was awarded a posthumous Pulitzer Prize in 1976. Ragtime music, which involves a sharply-syncopated melodic line over a rhythmically-steady accompaniment, may well have had its origins in piano music played in bordellos, a fact that gave the form some of its slightly-illicit reputation. A century later, however, ragtime music seems utterly innocent, a fresh evocation of a simpler era in American life. On the second half of this recital, Warren Jones offers two rags by Joplin: *Peacherine Rag* and *Magnetic Rag*.

Born Aaron Gumbinsky in Ohio, Harry von Tilzer became one of the most popular songwriters of his era, particularly when working in collaboration with lyricist Andrew Sterling. Among von Tilzer's best-known songs are *A Bird in a Gilded Cage* and *Wait Til the Sun Shines*, *Nellie* and he also wrote music for Broadway shows. One of von Tilzer and Sterling's earliest collaborations, the lilting, seductive *Coax Me*, dates from 1904.

A native of Ireland, Victor Herbert made his career in the United States, where he was a cellist and a conductor (he led the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra for six years) but he is best remembered today as a composer. Herbert wrote over forty operettas (the most famous of these are *Babes in Toyland* of 1903 and *Naughty Marietta* of 1910), as well as a number of songs. A frequent collaborator with Herbert, Glen MacDonough wrote the libretto for *Babes in Toyland*. They collaborated on the song *Ask Her While the Band Is Playing* in 1908.

*If I Had a Talking Picture of You*, originally part of the 1929 film *SunnySide Up*, is the work of a trio of songwriters who worked together between 1925 and 1930. Ray Henderson, who was a pianist and vaudeville performer, also composed *I'm Sitting on Top of the World* and *Five Feet Two, Eyes of Blue*. Lew Brown, the lyricist of the trio, also worked with Harry von Tilzer and with Harold Arlen, who wrote the music for *The Wizard of Oz*. G.G. DeSylva grew

up in Southern California, but moved to New York City, where he collaborated with Al Jolson and George Gershwin; DeSylva eventually returned to Los Angeles, where he produced movies and co-founded Capitol Records.

The African-American team of Henry Creamer and composer Turner Layton produced a number of songs early in the twentieth century, including patriotic songs during World War I before splitting up to go their own ways—Layton went on to a career as a cabaret performer in Europe. One of their best-known songs, *After You're Gone* (1918) has been recorded by Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra, Bessie Smith, Louis Armstrong, Sophie Tucker and countless other artists.

Born in Russia, Israel Baline came to this country with his family at age 5. He began writing songs as a boy and published his first at age 19. Four years later, under the name Irving Berlin, he achieved fame (and wealth) with the song *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and went on to become one of the most characteristic American voices of the twentieth century: Estimates of the number of songs he wrote run as high as 1500. Many of these—songs like *God Bless America*, *There's No Business Like Show Business* and *This Is the Army, Mr. Jones*—have become part of the American national identity.

This recital concludes with four of Berlin's songs, all composed in the particularly rich years of his song-writing during and after World War I. These four songs show many of the faces of Berlin's songs, including the comic, the erotic, the witty and, of course, the beautiful. *If You Don't Want My Peaches* (1914) has always been a favorite, particularly for its refrain. The slightly naughty *You'd Be Surprised* (1919) has been sung by many artists, including a version by Marilyn Monroe; it was memorably performed by Madeline Kahn as a part of Berlin's centennial celebration in 1988 at Carnegie Hall. *What'll I Do?* (1923) may be most familiar to modern audiences for its use in the 1974 film *The Great Gatsby*, starring Robert Redford. This haunting, evocative song captured the essence of the romantic longing at the heart of the Gatsby story in a way that the rest of the film did not. *I Love a Piano* (1915) is another favorite—witty, charming, infectious—that has been recorded by numerous artists.

—Program notes by Eric Bromberger