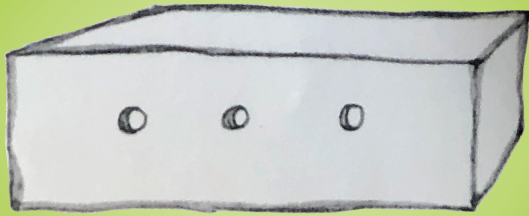


essential ★ invisible

The Little Prince

elgin youth symphony orchestra
2018-19 season



Draw Me a Sheep

A Sense of Wonder

April 6, 2019

EYSO

ELGIN YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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2001 ELGIN IMAGE AWARD

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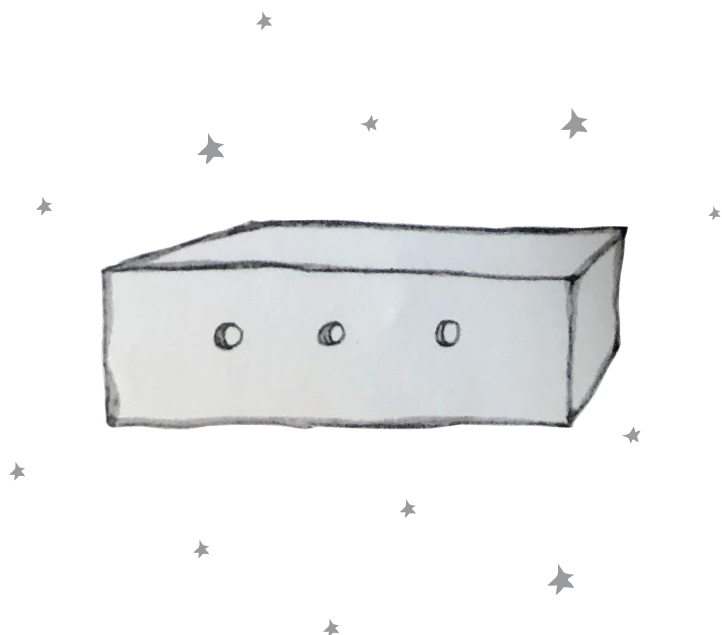


EYSO.ORG

Draw Me a Sheep

A Sense of Wonder

April 6, 2019



YOUTH SYMPHONY

Randal Swiggum, Conductor

Matthew Sheppard, Associate Conductor

FOCUS GROUP LLC

Ethan Parcell, Artistic Director

BRASS CHOIR

Jason Flaks, Conductor

FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DRAW ME A SHEEP A SENSE OF WONDER

A pilot whose plane has crashed in the desert is surprised to hear a sweet voice quietly ask, "If you please—draw me a sheep."

Although now beloved and familiar, this is an odd way to begin a book, even a fable for children. Yet it sets in motion some of the Big Ideas of the story—the importance of imagination, of risk-taking, of not fearing the unfamiliar.



Although he has not drawn anything since childhood (and never a sheep), the Pilot surprises himself by sketching a little sheep ("too sickly", says the Little Prince), and then another ("too old") and another ("that's a ram"). Finally, the exasperated Pilot sketches a box with holes in it.

"This is only his box. The sheep you asked for is inside."

"That is exactly the way I wanted it!" exclaims the Little Prince (the first of many delightful but puzzling moments in their unfolding affection for each other).



Tonight's concert plays on this idea: being open to seeing something that is not immediately apparent, something that might enlarge our experience, or challenge our established notions. When Jason Flaks and I first began discussing this concert over a year ago, we knew we wanted to provide our students with a truly eye-opening experience, with music that was radically different, a work of art so new and unfamiliar that it would stretch them, perhaps even transform them. ("Transformative Experiences" might be our EYSO byline.)

WITNESS REUNION, tonight's premiere, will be such a piece, guaranteed. Even the phrase "experimental opera" will not quite account for the moments when you will be puzzled by what you hear—trying to make sense of what feels at once both familiar and unfamiliar—or overwhelmed by the pure sonic beauty of Ethan's music, his sensitive collaborators in Focus Group, and our EYSO kids.

This is art. Art which, like the Pilot's box, invites you to not sit back passively, but to engage fully—to pay close attention, to let your imagination soar, and to be open to the possibilities in something unfamiliar and new.

Toward a renewed sense of wonder,

Randal Swiggum

PROGRAM

YOUTH SYMPHONY

Randal Swiggum, Conductor

blue cathedral (2000)

Jennifer Higdon (b.1962)

While grief can paralyze ordinary individuals, it often inspires artists to create their finest works. Saint-Exupéry was in the darkest period of his life when he wrote *The Little Prince*. Jennifer Higdon composed *blue cathedral* as a memorial to her brother, Andy “Blue” Higdon, who died suddenly of cancer in 1998, at age 33. It quickly became an American “classic”; now performed by well over three hundred orchestras, it is frequently the most performed piece by a living American composer in any given year. The EYSO has had a special relationship with this piece since introducing it at the 2006 Aberdeen International Festival in Scotland, the UK premiere of the piece.

Higdon expressed some of her thoughts about the creation of this deeply touching work: “When I began *blue cathedral*, it was the one-year anniversary of my brother’s death, so I was pondering a lot of things about the journey we make after death. ...I was imagining a traveler on a journey through a glass cathedral in the sky (therefore making it a blue color). ...I wanted the music to sound like it was progressing into this constantly opening space, feeling more and more celebratory. ... As the journey progresses, the individual would float higher and higher above the floor, soaring towards an expanded ceiling where the heart would feel full and joyful.”

Gently and quietly, *blue cathedral* opens with the delicate sounds of bells and whispered strings. Two solo instruments then begin a tender dialogue—the flute (Higdon’s own instrument) speaks first, as the older sibling, and then the clarinet, which was her brother’s instrument. The two voices grow more impassioned until the strings reach a soaring climax. Another contemplative section for English horn begins quietly and grows to ecstatic outbursts by the full orchestra. The piece ends quietly, returning to the main theme again with flute, clarinet and English horn over gently muted strings. A prepared piano, the timbre of which is meant to sound like a clock chiming, gives thirty-three strikes in groups of three, representing the age of her brother when he died. The piece ends with the gentle sounds of dozens of Chinese health bells and tuned crystal glasses, shimmering and mysterious.

Jennifer Higdon is one of America’s most acclaimed figures in contemporary classical music, receiving the 2010 Pulitzer Prize in Music for her *Violin Concerto*, a 2010 Grammy for her *Percussion Concerto* and a 2018 Grammy for her *Viola Concerto*. Most recently, Higdon received the prestigious Nemmers Prize from Northwestern University which is awarded to contemporary classical composers of exceptional achievement who have significantly influenced the field of composition. Higdon enjoys several hundred performances a year of her works, and *blue cathedral* is one of today’s most performed contemporary orchestral works, with more than 600 performances worldwide. Her works have been recorded on more than sixty CDs. Higdon’s first opera, *Cold Mountain*, won the International Opera Award for Best World Premiere and the opera recording was nominated for 2 Grammy awards. She holds the Rock Chair in Composition at The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. Her music is published exclusively by Lawdon Press.

FOCUS GROUP LLC

Ethan Parcell, Artistic Director

from **WORLD RECORD (2018)** Ethan Parcell (b.1992)

I. Opening Minutes

II. Little League

WORLD RECORD is an opera about a singer in the Midwest concerned with the past, present and future of world records.

It is a piece about creation myth, perfect performance, natural disasters, retirement communities, youth culture, false promise, birth reckoning, and metal theft. It is told in 27 songs, and on recording, 3 phone calls.

BRASS CHOIR

Jason Flaks, Conductor

Symphony in Brass

Eric Ewazen (b.1954)

II. Andante con moto

I. Andante-Allegro molto

Ewazen's music is defined by a tasteful blend of Romantic-style melody and 20th-century harmony. He has said that although for several years he wrote 12-tone and atonal works, he ultimately decided "to write music that people want to listen to." His music is lyrical, lush and evocative. Ewazen studied under Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Warren Benson, Gunther Schuller and Joseph Schwantner, taking some of the compositional style of each composer with him in forging his own distinctive sound.

Symphony in Brass was commissioned by the Detroit Chamber Winds. In three movements, it covers the spectrum of playing styles, some expected and others not, that brass instruments can perform. Opening with a lyrical melody that ebbs and flows against its accompaniment, the movement then takes off with a faster tempo and complex rhythmic figures shared throughout the various sections. Ewazen weaves rhythmic and melodic snippets through different parts within a section—everyone ends up with challenging links in the musical chain, and the musicians often need to function as a relay team.

The second movement begins with a melody in the baritone part that grows in length with each statement. In an unassuming but powerful gesture, Ewazen simply states the main melody quietly and then repeats the same melody, but stronger and louder. The idea is so simple, but the effect is profound, offering an exhilarating feeling for both listener and performer.

FOCUS GROUP LLC, YOUTH SYMPHONY, AND BRASS CHOIR

Focus Group LLC

Hannah Bureau, violin

Alec Watson, piano

Kenan Serenbetz, pump organ and banjo

Ethan T. Parcell, voice

WITNESS REUNION, an opera in Seven Parts (Premiere performance)

Ethan Parcell (b.1992)

- 1: Clothbound
- 2: Attempt: Townspeople in Lukewarm Light
- 3: Song for Place of Break
- 4: Attempt: Townspeople Glimpse the Reassembled Bridge
- 5: Disrepair in Replica
- 6: Attempt: Townspeople Melt the Bells and Forge
One Much Larger Bell
- 7: Witness Reunion and Postamble

A note from Ethan Parcell:

WITNESS REUNION is the third opera written for Focus Group LLC, after *World Record* and *Wasted Light*. Material for all three pieces started being developed in 2016, and *WITNESS REUNION* was shaped for the EYSO and finished in early 2019. The three pieces make up a body of operas that are inward-turning, conversational, and reaching toward something essential through smallness.

There's a moment in *The Little Prince* that serendipitously sums up the whole ethos of Focus Group LLC and the text within these pieces. The Little Prince encounters a businessman who claims that he owns the stars because he's the first person who has thought to count them. While the Prince is irritated at the businessman's insistence that he is busy with "matters of consequence," he also asks him what he does with his final count of stars. The business man replies that he writes the number down on a little paper, then locks the paper in the drawer. The Prince finds it silly but poetic.

My work often orbits around this same poetic futility. As people looking for a sense of order and understanding in the world, we want to quantify. We want our truths to snap to a grid, our accomplishments and goodness to be measurable in units with clear precedents. The question behind this quantifying urge though, is what do we do with our measurements? What is the endgame once everything has been snapped to the grid, if it can all be snapped into place at all?

As the Little Prince asks the pilot to “draw me a sheep,” we see, amongst other things, the purity of intention. The depth of desiring something specific, but not precise. One reason I call these pieces “opera” is because there’s a great deal of singing about singing, or songs about music. In the previous two operas, we linger in questions like “can you hear my voice from this far away?” and “is there something inside this that’s worth singing?”. In *WITNESS REUNION*, the answer is a definitive and earnest “yes”.

Music, thank goodness, is not just an auditory art form, it’s also a social one. The joy of having my dear friends, mentors, and a swath of ever-inspiring young people with whom to make music renders all the quantifications beautifully irrelevant. *WITNESS REUNION* is simultaneously a final acknowledgement of the “measurement urge” and a celebration of communal sound making. In the spirit of “Draw Me a Sheep”, the story is told in four simple songs, with three interludes that we are considering “attempts” at finding a more imprecise but humble truth.

OUR GUEST ARTISTS

Ethan T. Parcell is a musician, artist, and educator born and raised in Geneva, IL and currently based in Chicago. He works in the fields of composition (especially for young musicians), performance (principally spoken), writing (mostly to sing it later) and visual art (largely iterative drawings).

His compositions have been performed throughout the U.S. and Canada by Boston Musica Viva, the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra (the EYSO’s first-ever composer-in-residence), and various others. He received his B.M. in Composition from the Boston Conservatory under Andy Vores, Curtis Hughes, and Jan Swafford.

He is an active performer in experimental theatre and music, and leads the experimental opera ensemble Focus Group LLC. Parcell appears on over a dozen recordings as a percussionist, clarinetist, guitarist and singer, both as a collaborator and leader. He is also a teaching artist for Sistema Ravinia, the Olive Tree Arts Network, and various other institutions throughout Chicagoland. His handwriting and drawings have been exhibited in group shows in the US, Malta, and Mexico.

Focus Group LLC is an experimental opera ensemble formed in Chicago in 2016 by composer and writer Ethan T. Parcell. Built from long-standing musical partnerships, a shared improvisatory language, and Parcell’s dense texts, they have performed at various art spaces in Chicago and released three full-length recordings. 2018’s *World Record* was a three-act opera centering around concerns of legacy and creation myth, while 2019’s *Wasted Light* took shape as a poetic lecture on a broken billboard and meaning making. *Billboard Songs (Wasted Light Variations)* showcased the ensemble’s colorful playing and improvisational prowess. Focus Group LLC are honored to embody this new work with the EYSO.

YOUTH SYMPHONY

VIOLIN

Ethan Blankenship, Kildeer
Lauren Chang, Wheaton *
Claire Collins, Carpentersville * ∞
Zylle Constantino, Gilberts **
Sarah Cowley, Elgin *
Joshua DiGiacoma, Glen Ellyn
Christian Dik, Batavia
Lasey Emmerich, Saint Charles
Steven Frankowski, Carpentersville
Christoph Gaffud, Lombard
Chandra Gangavarapu, Naperville
Abigail Hutter, Geneva
Perry Li, Algonquin *
Caroline Lindwall, Geneva
Samuel Mathew, Oswego
Cal O'Connor, Saint Charles
Satomi Radostits, Aurora * ∞
Pranav Ramachandra, Palatine
Rebekka Rantanen, Naperville
Laura Ribeiro, Carol Stream
Eron Ristich, Naperville
Ayumu Seiya, Saint Charles * * ♫
Olivia Shi, Algonquin *
Amelia Simpson, Saint Charles + * ♫
Zachary Stordahl, Cary *
Akshay Sundaram, Naperville
Maya Umlauf, Glen Ellyn
Zoe Umlauf, Glen Ellyn
Joe Williamson, West Chicago
Eunice Yoon, Downers Grove

VIOLA

Marina Akamatsu, Glen Ellyn
Storey Childs, Saint Charles * * ♫
Zachary Gustafson, Yorkville * ∞
Noah Hauptmann, Saint Charles
Timothy Holman, Glendale Heights *
Matt Hurley, Mount Prospect **
Amogh Prasad, Naperville *
Miranda Preuss, Bartlett
Joshua Tabb, Aurora

CELLO

Trudie Childs, Saint Charles * * ♫

Jeff Donnan, Saint Charles
Emily Dow, Elmhurst *
Emma Froeschke, Carpentersville
Aasma Haider, Hanover Park *
James Longhurst, Wheaton *
Raphael Maranon, Skokie
Abigail Marianetti, Elmhurst
Jay Reiter, Glen Ellyn * * ∞
Alexander Ristich, Naperville
Abigail Vanderploeg, Aurora
Daniel Zhao, Naperville *

BASS

Fiona Lukes, West Dundee
Alyssa Trebat, Algonquin *
Andrew Viveros, Bartlett

FLUTE

Tom Matthews Memorial Principal Flute Chair
Miriam Franks, Mundelein *
Kaitlyn Kowalski, Plainfield * e
Miguel Rodriguez, Elgin *

OBOE

David Galanes, Bartlett
Julia Kaniuk, Geneva *
Ezequiel Navarro, Aurora * e

CLARINET

Caitlin Annunzio, Montgomery
Rebekah Harness, Elgin * e
Daniel Wilczynski, Naperville
Zachary Wilder, Streamwood *

BASSOON

Ryan Berg, Geneva *
Blaine Betustak, Sugar Grove
Miah Miglore, Batavia * e
Keri Wozniak, Carpentersville

HORN

Veronica Ayars, Geneva * e
Benjamin Fioresi, Geneva *
Kaitlyn Holtz, Algonquin *
Olivia Leyba, Rockford
Sara Pfeil, Wayne
Acacia Steenberg, Crystal Lake * %

TRUMPET

Grace Adduci, Saint Charles *
Bailey Cates, Elburn *%
Gayle Moore, Carpentersville
Jackson Teetor, Elgin *%
Annika Templin, Geneva *

TROMBONE

Sebastian Cosma, North Aurora
Faith Cramer, Batavia *
Thomas Schluckbier, Schaumburg *%

TUBA

Lexie Newell, Saint Charles *%

BRASS CHOIR

HORN

Areeb Ahmed, Carpentersville
Samantha Ayars, Geneva
Veronica Ayars, Geneva
Zoe Becker, South Elgin
Brendan Coller, Batavia
Niels Eysturlid, Geneva
Benjamin Fioresi, Geneva
Michelle Gain, Geneva
Kaitlyn Holtz, Algonquin
Olivia Leyba, Rockford
Aidan Murray, Glen Ellyn
Sara Pfeil, Wayne
Aparna Ramakrishnan, Lisle
Luke Suarez, Peru
Acacia Steenberg, Crystal Lake

TRUMPET

Grace Adduci, Saint Charles
Bailey Cates, Elburn
Ruben Martinez, Carpentersville
Gayle Moore, Carpentersville
Avanish Narumanchi, South Barrington
Edward Pinkston, Itasca
Jeri Rethford, West Chicago
Jackson Teetor, Elgin

PERCUSSION

Simon Cooper, Hoffman Estates x
Graeme Leighton, Lombard x
Truman Silberg, Barrington x

HARP

Catrina Egner, Yorkville

+ Concertmaster
* Principal/Co-principal
* Chamber Music Institute
~ Maud Powell String Quartet
% Sterling Brass Quintet
∞ Hanson String Quartet
e Earl Clemens Wind Quintet
x Percussion Ensemble

Annika Templin, Geneva
Emanuel Vasquez, Carpentersville
Alexandra Walsh, Oswego

TROMBONE

Christian Bialek, Elgin
Sebastian Cosma, North Aurora
Faith Cramer, Batavia
Seth Lagerstrom, Woodstock
Ethan Sanderson, Elgin
Thomas Schluckbier, Schaumburg

EUPHONIUM

Ryan Blake, West Chicago
Clayton Wagner, Geneva

TUBA

Adam Faulkner, Geneva
Alex Karwowski, Wayne
Lexie Newell, Saint Charles
Avery Osborne, Aurora
Jack Smith, Geneva
Matthew Styrna, Geneva

PERCUSSION

Simon Cooper, Hoffman Estates
Graeme Leighton, Lombard
Truman Silberg, Barrington

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FOR THE 2019-20 SEASON
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ELGIN YOUTH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



EYSO's 43rd season draws inspiration from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's famous quote, "What is essential is invisible to the eye," and explores the powerful ways that art makes us see what matters most about our humanity.

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November 4, 2018 ECC Arts Center

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April 14, 2019

II. SEE THE WHEAT FIELDS?
Mystery, Memory, and Meaning
March 10, 2019 ECC Arts Center

OPEN HOUSE
February 24, 2019
April 14, 2019

III. DRAW ME A SHEEP
A Sense of Wonder
April 6, 2019 ECC Arts Center

2019-20 SEASON AUDITIONS
May 30-June 2, 2019

IV. LITTLE BELLS ARE
CHANGED TO TEARS
Laughter, Longing, and Loss
May 5, 2019 ECC Arts Center

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