

I N V E R S I O N   P R O U D L Y   P R E S E N T S



an INVERSION RECITAL SERIES concert featuring solo compositions by IN-HOUSE COMPOSERS

KATRINA SAPORSANTOS soprano   BENJIE DIA piano   APRIL 9 at 7:30 pm at KMFA's DRAYLEN MASON MUSIC STUDIO

41 Navasota St, Austin, TX 78702   TICKETS are on sale now at [WWW.INVERSIONATX.ORG](http://WWW.INVERSIONATX.ORG) or can be purchased at the DOOR

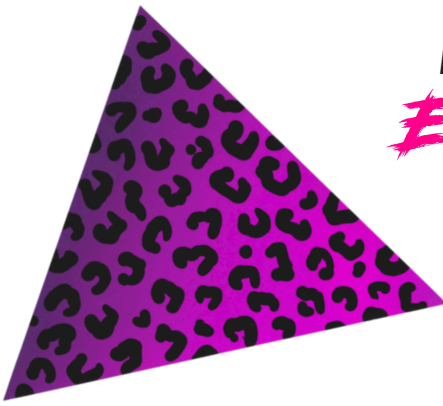
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**Inversion's Recital Series Presents**  
**ETERNAL GRAFFITI**

April 9, 2022 at 7:30 pm  
KMFA Draylen Mason Music Studio  
41 Navasota St, Austin, TX 78702

Katrina Saporantos, soprano  
Benjamin Dia, piano



**inversion**

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**FIRE & ICE**

**Inversion Da Capo in Collaboration with Chaski**

May 21, 2022 at 7:30 pm & May 22, 2022 at 3:00 pm  
Hosted by Arts on Alexander on the campus of Redeemer Presbyterian Church  
2111 Alexander Ave, Austin, TX 78722

[Tickets available here.](#)

**I BELONG TO YOU**

**Inversion Ensemble in Collaboration with Greg Pak**

June 25, 2022 at 7:30 PM  
Bates Recital Hall  
2406 Robert Dedman Dr, Austin, TX 78712

[Tickets available here.](#)

**More information about upcoming concerts can be found on page 12!**

# KATRINA SAPORSANTOS

Filipino soprano **Katrina Saporsantos**, hailed by critics for her “beautiful singing” (Washington Post) and sustained fortissimos that are “most impressive, arresting attention repeatedly” (Philippine Star), is a vocal artist lauded for the beauty of her instrument and the depth and complexity she brings to the different characters she plays onstage. She is a Finalist of the 2015 Mary Trueman Art Song Competition for the Art Song Preservation Society of New York, an Encouragement Award recipient in the Wagner Division at the 2015 Gerda Lissner International Vocal Competition, and a Third Place winner of the National Music Competitions for Young Artists (NAMCYA) in the Philippines. She has performed at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Hall, Metropolitan Opera Guild, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, and Merkin Concert Hall, among others.



In addition to *Eternal Graffiti*, Katrina will soon appear in an online performance with the University of the Philippines Symphony Orchestra. In the 2020-2021 season, Katrina performed as a featured soloist for a number of online concerts, some of which include: The Ateneo de Manila Glee Club's *Laya*; the world premiere of Steven S rpa's dramatic oratorio *James (book of Ruth)* and Robbie LaBanca's *Transpose* with Inversion Ensemble; and Brent Baldwin's *Atm sfera* with Panoramic Voices. In 2019-2020, Katrina premiered Nathan Felix's *Alien Wanderers*, *Alien World*, *Alien Home* at the Blanton Museum of Art, *Forgiveness* by Carlos Cordero with Panoramic Voices, and songs by Andrew Grainger in Cedar Park, Texas; performed the Texas premiere of composer Robin Estrada's *Duayya* at the Carver Museum of Art as part of the Austin Chamber Music Center's Summer Festival concerts; was a featured singer for Local Opera Local Artists, and soloist for Panoramic Voices; and performed several solo recitals in Austin, Texas where she currently resides with her husband and frequent collaborator, pianist Benjamin Dia. Katrina was a featured singer at the Metropolitan Opera Guild in New York, performing excerpts from *La Fanciulla del West*, and sang the role of Mother in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with Texas Concert Opera Collective in the 2018-2019 season.

# BENJAMIN DIA



**Benjamin Dia** is a pianist, arranger, and conductor. He made his debut as a collaborative pianist with the principal players of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra at the 1992 Asian Composers League Festival in the Cultural Center of the Philippines, premiering new works by emerging Asian composers. After graduating with a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of the Philippines, he went to the United States to pursue his graduate studies at the Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. Since then he has performed in music festivals and in venues such as The Asia Society of New York, Carnegie Hall, Merkin Concert Hall, Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts, Oslo Konserthus, and in the Aberdeen International Youth Festival.

**Both Katrina and Benjamin are fierce advocates of Filipino music and the creation and performance of new music.**

# PROGRAM

*All of the works on this program are world premiere performances.*

## She Walks in Beauty

by Suzette Emberton

Text by George Gordon Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

**Program note |** Written in 1814 and published in 1815, “She Walks in Beauty” is perhaps the best known of Lord Byron’s poems. The poem embodies the spirit of Romanticism, idealizing feminine beauty and portraying the woman’s outer beauty as a reflection of a beautiful soul and life well lived. Also notable is that the poet breaks the long established paradigm of aligning night and darkness with evil; instead he celebrates the unique beauty of the night. Scholars believe that Lord Byron wrote this poem after meeting his cousin, Ann Wilmot, dressed in black mourning attire, and being entranced by her loveliness, quiet confidence, and kind demeanor.

## Invocation

by Andrew Grainger

Text by Ursula K. Le Guin

O silence, my love silence,  
I have feared you: my tongue

has rattled on my teeth  
dreading to be dumb so long  
when I am done with breath.

And I have needed prattle,  
kind blather, and the come and go  
of voices, human voices,  
the sky whose moon you are,  
the ground whose flower.

But I beseech you come  
now, my love silence, O  
reward and freedom, balance  
beyond choices, in whom alone is heard  
the meditation of the twilight bird  
and the never to be spoken word.

## I Dream a World

by Andrew Grainger

Text by Langston Hughes

I dream a world where man  
No other man will scorn,  
Where love will bless the earth  
And peace its paths adorn  
I dream a world where all  
Will know sweet freedom's way,  
Where greed no longer saps the soul  
Nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black and white,  
Whatever race you be,  
Will share the bounties of the earth  
And every man is free,  
Where wretchedness will hang its head  
And joy, like a pearl,  
Attends the needs of all mankind-  
Of such a dream, my world!

**Program note** | I wrote these two songs for voice and piano in 2019. Both poems that I chose to set spoke to me in a special way and I loved the ambience they created. Ursula K. Le Guin's poem "Invocation" was particularly interesting to set to music because of its being about silence. I wanted to try and maintain this meditative feeling within the piece. Langston Hughes's poem "I Dream a World" is as relevant now as it was when he wrote it in 1941. Its themes of greed, avarice, and racism are powerful in a very succinct way, but the poem also points toward a better world in an uplifting way.

# Fog Horns

by Robbie LaBanca  
Text by David Mason

The loneliest days,  
damp and indistinct,  
sea and land a haze.

And purple fog horns  
blossomed over tides—  
bruises being born

in silence, so slow,  
so out there, around,  
above and below.

In such hurts of sound  
the known world became  
neither flat nor round.

The steaming tea pot  
was all we fathomed  
of *is* and *is not*.

The hours were hallways  
with doors at the ends  
opened into days

fading into night  
and the scattering  
particles of light.

Nothing was done then.  
Nothing was ever  
done. Then it was done.

*Used with permission.*

**Program note |** Fog Horns is based on the poem of the same title by American writer and poet laureate of Colorado, David Mason. In this short yet evocative poem, Mason conjures up images of weightlessness, a scene untethered from this world. He mixes sound and sight with phrases like 'purple fog horns blossomed' that add to the mystical, otherworldly atmosphere. The accompaniment of the piece is made of musical fragments that start unrelated but slowly converge into a hazy pattern while the vocal line meanders through the tonal center to reflect the wandering nature of the text. He ends the text with contradictory statements: 'nothing was ever done' and 'then it was done.' What was it that was suddenly done? I imagine it was the parting of the fog and the sun appearing after a period of confusion. The sudden shift in the clarity of music is meant to reflect that idea.

# INTERMISSION

## Excerpt from a conversation with my father.

by Robbie LaBanca  
Text by Nooshin Ghanbari

He tells me about the first time he saw God. How his cousin Hamid pushed him into the pool as a joke; how he didn't know how to swim; how the last thing he remembers is the collision of two heads, two hard skulls, too much blood painting clear turquoise muddy red. He tells me this was the first time he almost died, and that there have been nine more times since then. He says that God told him, *you are not ready*. He pauses, then tells me he is waiting for the day when God changes his mind.

*"Excerpt from a conversation with my father." © 2016 Nooshin Ghanbari – used with permission.*

**Program note |** This piece is very special to me as it was one of the first pieces I wrote during the pandemic lockdown in 2020. The feeling of isolation from friends and family made the text of this poem even more powerful. When you are younger, you often forget that your parents are people who had lives before you were born, who have hopes and dreams, many of them never realized, and relationships and struggles with the divine. This poem by the local writer and fellow musician Nooshin Ghanbari gives just a glimpse into part of a conversation between her and her father that brings to light all of these themes. The repetitive motifs in the piano accompaniment serve as a foundation for the narrative in the vocal line to unfold.

## Goodnight, Soliloquy

by Trevor Villwock  
Text by Taisia Kitaiskaia  
from *The Nightgown and Other Poems*

Oven off.  
TV stilled.  
Spine blind.  
Roots told.  
Fly drowned.  
Fields molten.

Tired of feeling everything, the lake takes no more prisoners.

May ancient wars travel your brow, may the skulls of jaguars call you  
with their emperors,  
Green nerves, liquid tesseract, goodness spooling—

May you wake  
Bellied, deserted.  
Years gathered.  
Feet mended.

Being steeled.  
Guardian howled.

Emerge from the milky eye.  
Held as you are by no one in particular, loose in the hands.

*Used with permission.*

**Program note** | I encountered Taisia's wonderful poetry when I walked into Malvern Books last year and asked for recommendations on local poets to collaborate with for Eternal Graffiti. I was immediately drawn in by the juxtaposition of surreal imagery and everyday routine in "Goodnight, Soliloquy." In writing the piece, I first set the text to a vocal melody methodically and then relied heavily on free improvisation for the piano accompaniment. This involved recording many takes directly into my notation software using MIDI and then toying with the ideas that were produced. Many times when I improvise this way, I actively let my mind drift from what I'm playing and then see what my hands produce when I'm not thinking about them. For me this kind of improvisation lets loose the subconscious mind in a way very similar to dreaming.

## **I am worth nothing**

**by Adrienne Inglis (ASCAP)**

**Text by Lisa Kay Adam**

**from her book *xuāi: mission, house, village, town***

No matter what we suffered,  
I knew my worth. I knew  
because I yet remembered  
the parents who traded us, my sister and I,  
to the Spaniard and his wife.  
My father had held my hand.  
And then, his hand held the reins  
of the dappled horses he led away,  
with woollen blankets on their back,  
and sacks of corn. My mother had  
carried my smaller sister. And then, her arms  
held cloth, a cloak, a bag of food,  
a bag of beads, a silver bracelet.

I remember their backs, their arms,  
as they walked away, heavy with our worth  
which would feed and clothe many.

I knew our worth, traded for our bodies,  
and for our work. No matter what we suffered,  
always, I remembered our worth.

But then, my sister died.  
I will not say how. Soon after,



the priest came and brought me  
to the mission. Had he bought me?

I think not.  
Although the priest save me,  
he also taught me—

*Pīntci nakāmmam axām,*  
I am worth nothing.  
So we say in the confession.

It is my sins that count for something.  
It is sin that I carry. I can only work,  
and pray. I pray for God  
to take away my heavy sins,  
to make me worthy someday  
to fly to heaven. Even though—  
*pīntci nakāmmam axām,*  
I am worth nothing.

*Used with permission; published by Lamar University Literary Press.  
Copyright © 2018 by Lisa Kay Adam*

**Program note |** Commissioned by Inversion Ensemble and composed by Adrienne Inglis, I am worth nothing sets a stunning Coahuilteco/English poem by Texas poet Lisa Kay Adam. From the phrase *Pīntci nakāmmam axām* (I am worth nothing), Adam creates a vivid story of two young Coahuiltecan sisters and their encounters with newly arrived Spanish settlers and mission priests in the eighteenth century. Musically, the florid phrases and haunting modalities join with the sounds of drums and melancholic bells to paint a picture of exploitation, early death, and a lost way of life in the western gulf coastal plains.

## Children Walk on Chairs to Cross a Flooded Schoolyard

by Steven Sérpa

Excerpt taken from text by Patrick Rosal

based on the photo by Noel Celis

Hardly anything holds the children up, each poised  
mid-air, barely the ball of one small foot  
kissing the chair's wood, so  
they don't just step across, but pause  
above the water. I look at that cotton mangle  
of a sky, post-typhoon, and presume  
it's holding something back. In this country,  
it's the season of greedy gods  
and the several hundred cathedrals  
worth of water they spill onto little tropic villages  
like this one, where a girl is likely to know  
the name of the man who built  
every chair in her school by hand,

six of which are now arranged  
into a makeshift bridge so that she and her mates  
can cross their flooded schoolyard.  
Boys in royal blue shorts and red rain boots,  
the girls brown and bare-toed  
in starch white shirts and pleated skirts.  
They hover like bells that can choose  
to withhold their one clear, true  
bronze note, until all this nonsense  
of wind and drizzle dies down.  
One boy even reaches forward  
into the dark sudden pool below  
toward someone we can't see, and  
at the same time, without looking, seems  
to offer the tips of his fingers back to the smaller girl  
behind him. I want the children  
ferried quickly across so they can get back  
to slapping one another on the neck  
and cheating each other at checkers.

*"Children Walk on Chairs to Cross a Flooded Schoolyard" by Patrick Rosal appears in The Last Thing: New & Selected Poems by Patrick Rosal. Copyright © 2021. Reprinted by permission of Persea Books, Inc. (New York).*

**Program note |** "Children Walk on Chairs..." is the first in a series of works I'm writing for soprano Katrina Saporsantos. These works explore the poetry of Patrick Rosal and his own exploration of the Asian-American immigrant experience, as the son of Filipino parents in the US. This poem (based on the photo by photojournalist Noel Celis) is in part a connection but also a disconnection. It expresses a journalist's observation and a human's emotion in the aftermath of a typhoon in the Philippines. The poem also shares, in a specific instant, the feelings of connection and disconnection of the Filipino diaspora, feelings to which any person (dis)connected from their ancestral home might relate in the wake of a natural disaster or national tragedy.

**Thank you for attending *Eternal Graffiti!***



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### **FIRE & ICE**

*Inversion Da Capo in Collaboration with Chaski*

**May 21, 2022 at 7:30 pm & May 22, 2022 at 3:00 pm**

**Hosted by Arts on Alexander on the campus of  
Redeemer Presbyterian Church  
2111 Alexander Ave, Austin, TX 78722**

Inversion's treble chorus, Da Capo, explores the passions and seasons of life at their concert, "Fire and Ice," on May 21 and 22, 2022. In collaboration with flute and harp duo Chaski, Da Capo delves into the partnerships between love and loss, chaos and order, and darkness and light. Featuring works by Ola Gjeilo and

R. Murray Shafer; in-house composers Trevor Shaw, Adrienne Inglis, and Joshua Chai; and Cole Reyes, winner of the Inversion Sandra Fivecoat Memorial Emerging Composer Contest Under 35 Division.



[More information and tickets available here.](#)



### **I BELONG TO YOU**

*Inversion Ensemble in Collaboration with Greg Pak*

**June 25, 2022 at 7:30 PM**

**Bates Recital Hall**

**2406 Robert Dedman Dr, Austin, TX 78712**

Inversion presents *I Belong to You*, a spectacular multimedia experience featuring the world premiere of "Motherland/I Belong to You," an unprecedented oratorio blending poetry, comic book illustration, and choral music. The autobiographical libretto by critically acclaimed comic book author Greg Pak (*The Incredible Hulk*, *Star Wars*) explores the history, culture, and natural wonders of Texas from the perspective of a native Texan during the various stages of his life. The musical adaptation of Pak's text by Inversion's three founding members—composers Adrienne Inglis, Robbie LaBanca, and Trevor F. Shaw—will be sung by Inversion's flagship choral ensemble and accompanied by guest artists Invoke string quartet and Ethan Shaw (Chili Cold Blood), steel guitarist.

"Motherland/I Belong to You" will also be published as an original comic book by Greg Pak, commissioned by Inversion, with illustration by renowned artists Ann Smith, Dustinn Craig, Ethan Young, Sean Chen, and Shing Yin Khor. Audience members will enjoy live, on-screen projections of the original artwork during the performance. VIP tickets include a hardback, limited-edition version of the comic book, signed by Greg Pak! Join Inversion Ensemble and Greg Pak on Saturday June 25, 7:30pm in Bates Recital Hall at the UT Butler School of Music for "I Belong to You," sponsored in part by Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy.

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