

COPLAND GETTY HEGGIE
TILSON THOMAS

Songs on Poems by
Emily Dickinson

*A certain
slant
of light*

LISA DELAN
SOPRANO

Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille
Lawrence Foster



A Certain Slant of Light

Songs on Poems by Emily Dickinson

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson (1948/1950)

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Nature, the gentlest mother | 3.48 |
| 2 | There came a wind like a bugle | 1.36 |
| 3 | The world feels dusty | 1.39 |
| 4 | Heart, we will forget him | 2.10 |
| 5 | Dear March, come in! | 2.17 |
| 6 | Sleep is supposed to be | 2.31 |
| 7 | Going to Heaven! | 2.49 |
| 8 | The Chariot | 3.09 |

Jake Heggie (b. 1961)

Newer Every Day (2014)

| | | |
|----|--------------------------|------|
| 9 | Silence | 2.02 |
| 10 | I'm Nobody! Who are you? | 1.40 |
| 11 | Fame | 1.01 |
| 12 | That I did always love | 3.33 |
| 13 | Goodnight | 3.31 |

Gordon Getty (b. 1933)

Four Dickinson Songs (2008)

| | | |
|----|------------------------------------|------|
| 14 | Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers | 1.10 |
| 15 | A Bird Came Down the Walk | 1.37 |
| 16 | There's a Certain Slant of Light | 1.51 |
| 17 | Because I Could Not Stop for Death | 2.11 |

Michael Tilson Thomas (b. 1944)

Poems of Emily Dickinson, selections (2001)

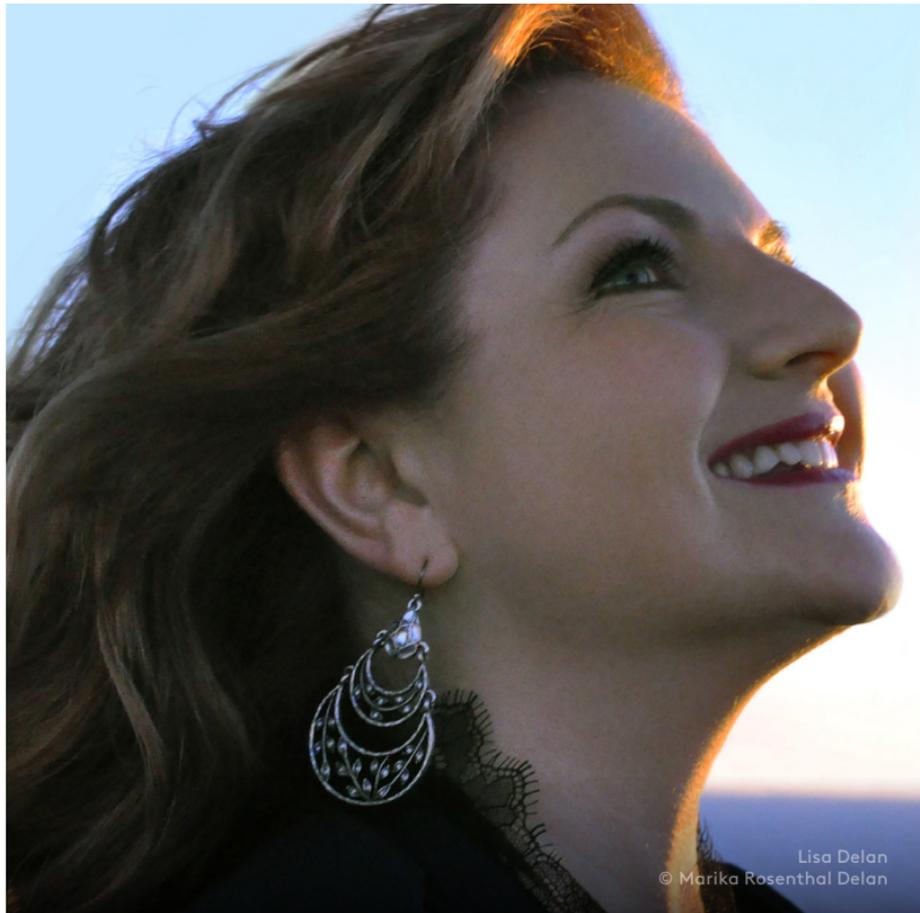
| | | |
|----|---------------------------|------|
| 18 | Down Time's Quaint Stream | 1.15 |
| 19 | The Bible | 4.36 |
| 20 | Fame | 1.27 |
| 21 | The Earth Has Many Keys | 2.30 |
| 22 | Take All Away From Me | 3.34 |

Total playing time: 52.10

Lisa Delan, soprano

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Lisa Delan
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Emily Dickinson has been a presence in my life from the age of 11, when my Uncle Dan gave me the Johnson edition of *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, newly reprinted that year (1976). Without being aware of her poetry's innate connection to music, I began setting Emily's verses, creating simple tunes I sang while accompanying myself on guitar. Emily invited me into the world of poetry and inspired my enduring passion for singing the words of the great poets. I discovered Aaron Copland's wondrous settings of Dickinson as a conservatory student, but did not perform any composer's settings of her poems until I was introduced to Gordon Getty's magnificent cycle *The White Election*. I have been honored to both perform and record this cycle, living deeply within the 31 poems that comprise its text. I found that Emily's words bloomed inside me in ways both startling and intoxicating. While recording this album, I felt Emily's words blossoming in me again, through the voices of Copland, Getty, Jake Heggie and Michael Tilson Thomas. I approached their songs with the same sense of awe I felt when first cracking the spine of the volume my uncle gave to me a lifetime ago... though it feels like yesterday. As Emily wrote:

*Forever – is composed of Nows –
'Tis not a different time –
Except for Infiniteness –
And Latitude of Home –*

- Lisa Delan

A Certain Slant of Light

Many composers have been drawn to Emily Dickinson (1830-1886), perhaps without realizing that Dickinson's own early years were full of music, her musical activities having preceded and informed her later dedication to poetry.

Like most young women of the middle and upper classes in Antebellum America, Dickinson studied piano and voice. The family parlor was the nexus of lively musical activity, and music was often a topic in Dickinson's correspondence. On August 3, 1845, fourteen-year-old Emily wrote to her friend Abiah Root:

Are you practising now you are at home—I hope you are, for if you are not you would be likely to forget what you have learnt. I want very much to hear you play ... I have the

same Instruction book that you have, Bertini, [*Progressive and Complete Method for the Piano*] and I am getting along in it very well. Aunt Selby [her teacher] says she shant let me have many tunes now for she wants I should get over in the book a good ways first ... I have been learning several beautiful pieces lately. "The Grave of Bonaparte" is one. "Lancers Quick Step"—"Wood up," and "Maiden Weep no More," which is a sweet little song. I wish much to see you and hear you play. (L7)

Between the ages of 13 and 22, Emily Dickinson avidly pursued music. She attended concerts and collected a great deal of published sheet music to perform at home. At the conclusion of her musical studies, as was the custom, Dickinson's sheet music was sent out to be bound into a large keepsake volume. Her music book is now part

of the Dickinson Collection at Harvard University.

Dickinson played waltzes, marches, quicksteps, instrumental variations on operatic arias, and popular music such as "Home Sweet Home" and "The Last Rose of Summer." She also played traditional jigs, reels, and hornpipes, from which she perhaps drew inspiration. Dickinson was observed by family and neighbors to be an expert improviser at the piano, creating late at night what her cousin described as "heavenly music." Recalling a family gathering, a childhood friend described her improvisations as "weird and beautiful melodies, all from her own inspiration."

But as the 1860s approached, she avidly began hearing and collecting music of a different type. Dickinson had attained substantial musical experience

and expertise and began using it as a source to shape her emerging poetic voice. Between 1861 and 1864 Dickinson produced a staggering number of poems—708. In many of those poems she thought musically — through metaphors, borrowings, and boundary crossings that would assist her in making a transition from pianist to poet.

In an April 1862 letter to Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823–1911), an abolitionist and literary figure who had become a mentor to Dickinson, she alluded to this musical and poetic transformation:

You ask of my Companions [.]
Hills—Sir—and the Sundown—and a
Dog—large as myself, that my Father
bought me— They are better than
Beings—because they know—but do
not tell—and the noise in the Pool, at
Noon—excels my Piano. (L261)

To Dickinson, the noon hour meant that the cacophony of nature was most active and alive to her. She often used musical metaphors to describe those noontime symphonies; and as her poetic voice emerged, she increasingly began to recognize that the musical backdrop of nature that was informing her verse was far superior to the sounds and textures of her own "Piano."

Dickinson also borrowed a great deal from the hymnbooks in her father's library. Although she gradually withdrew from attending church services, Dickinson's intimate familiarity with the Christian hymn tradition sustained her in new ways. It is widely known that hymn meter and popular ballad meter underpin a good deal of Dickinson's poetry. Emulating the established female hymn composers of her day, Dickinson's metered structure served as an anchoring device of conformity.

Her texts on the other hand rebelled against that conformity. By ascribing a secularized, gendered divinity to the world around her, and by employing an unorthodox system of dashes in her poems, Dickinson created a cohesive and musical, yet dissonant poetic voice, sometimes sounding folk-like, other times rugged, or as Dickinson liked to say "New Englandly." (Fr256)

It is this innate musicality that makes Dickinson's poems so attractive to composers. Dickinson said, "I dwell in possibility" (Fr466), and the music on this album offers a range of fascinating and compelling musical approaches.

One of the earliest composers to set Dickinson's poems was **Aaron Copland** (1900-1990). Attracted by her "folklike" and "unconventional" qualities, Copland began his cycle of twelve songs for soprano and piano in 1949, premiering

them the following year. Soon after their publication Copland began selectively orchestrating his settings, and by 1970 had fashioned *Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson*, a subset of the original cycle, that he considered suitable for an orchestral palette.

Copland sourced his poems from two collections. One was *Emily Dickinson Poems: First and Second Series* (1890, 1891, reprinted 1948) edited by Mabel Loomis Todd and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, the first collections of Dickinson poems.

Todd and Higginson characterized Dickinson as a "recluse," "unconventional" and of "daring thought," but they heavily edited her poems to conform to contemporary tastes and market expectations. They removed dashes, grouped poems into subjects, and even assigned titles to

some of the poems, which Dickinson seldom did.

Copland also consulted *Poems by Emily Dickinson* (1947) edited by Martha Dickinson Bianchi - Dickinson's niece - and Alfred Leete Hampson. The Bianchi/Hampson editions followed the same conventions and editorial alterations as presented by Todd and Higginson. Much has been written about these alterations. Given the fact that Dickinson's papers did not arrive at their present locations of Harvard University and Amherst College until 1950 and 1956, respectively, the published editions to which Copland had access lack the authority available to present-day scholars; on the other hand, those earlier editions and his settings indicate the emerging popularity of Dickinson at that time.

Copland's setting of "Because I could not stop for death" was given the title "The Chariot" by Dickinson's first editors, and Copland retains that title in his score. Although Copland's setting alters the first line, substituting the word "would" for Dickinson's "could," in his 1989 published oral history, Copland accurately recalls the first line of the poem when he recounts that "I fell in love with one poem 'The Chariot.' Its first line absolutely threw me. 'Because I could not stop for Death, he kindly stopped for me.'" In Dickinson's original manuscripts, the poem "The World—feels Dusty" contains the last two lines "Dews of Thessaly, to fetch—/And Hybla Balms—" differing completely from the published 1947 Bianchi edition used by Copland. In "Heart! We will forget him!" Dickinson's manuscript contains the final line: "I remember him." Copland uses the line "I may remember him" as it appears in the 1947 Bianchi edition. One wonders

how the ending of Copland's setting might sound had he not had that extra syllable available to him at the time!

Unlike Copland, the other composers on this album had the distinct advantage of the modern variorum editions of Thomas Johnson (1955) and Ralph W. Franklin (1998). These editions attempted to elucidate Dickinson's poetic conceptions and transmit everything, including the dissonant musicality of the dashes that so confounded the early editors, yet are such a familiar facet of her distinctive style.

That is certainly the case with composer **Jake Heggie**, who has taken full advantage of Dickinson's published correspondence and the Johnson edition of her poems. Recalling the line written in 1872 by Emily Dickinson to her cousin Louise Norcross, "We turn not older with [the] years, but newer every day" (L379), Heggie has fashioned a broad and

searching cycle of poems. Commissioned by Welz Kaufman and the Ravinia Festival to celebrate the 70th birthday of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa in 2014, these settings, originally for voice and piano, have been orchestrated especially for this recording.

Heggie notes that each of the poems conveys the "deep and sometimes painful need to connect, especially as time is flying by." He comments that Dickinson's poem "Silence is all we dread" (J1251, c.1873) taps into "the vast silence of infinity that we fear—and it is the consolation of even a single human voice that can redeem, comfort and give meaning to our short time on the planet."

"I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (J288, c.1861) conveys an emotion, says Heggie, "each and every one of us feels at some point." "Fame is a bee" (J1763, undated),

he notes, is "about the very nature of fame: comparing it to a bee with a song, a fleeting wing—and a sting."

Central to the cycle is the poem "That I did always love I bring thee Proof" (J 549, c. 1862) which, for Heggie, examines the commonality of the human spirit, experienced through "joy, fear, love and loss."

The cycle's final setting combines two Dickinson poems, "Some Say Goodnight at Night" (J1739, undated) and "Look back on Time, with kindly eyes—" (J1478, c. 1879). Both poems, says Heggie, "are about saying goodbye without bitterness or regret." That sentiment is indeed palpable in this final song of life, love and parting.

While composing his 1981 Dickinson cycle *The White Election*, composer **Gordon Getty** considered many more

Dickinson poems than the 31 that are included in that major opus. Some of those poems are here in his 2008 cycle *Four Dickinson Songs*, orchestrated especially for this recording. The composer notes that the main musical material for “A bird came down the walk” (J328, c. 1862) was written “in college days, in the spirit of Schubert or Schumann, but [I] never whipped it into publishing shape. When Barbara Bonney kindly asked for a few songs to verse by an American poetess, I was grateful to be reminded of this unfinished business, along with the opportunity to suggest the oppressive cathedral tunes [of ‘There’s a certain Slant of light’ (J258, c. 1861)] and the clip-clop of the hearse carriage” in the cycle’s final poem “Because I could not stop for death” (J712, c. 1863). In the poem “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers—” (J216, c. 1859/1861), the composer hauntingly evokes

Dickinson’s imagery of those in eternal sleep, awaiting the Resurrection.

Of the five *Poems of Emily Dickinson* (2002) selected for this recording, **Michael Tilson Thomas** writes: “I wanted to focus on more of [Dickinson’s] ironic quality, [her] social criticism—and also on the sense of appreciation for just being alive, which is so much a part of her work.”

In “Down Time’s quaint stream” (Fr1721, undated) the composer evokes a sea chanty, rolling and pitching us along on Dickinson’s seafaring take on the eternal voyage, with no map in hand, and no end in sight.

In the years she attended church, Dickinson wrote to friends about her imaginative intellectual wanderings during services. “The Bible is an antique Volume” (Fr1577), although written in

1882, may have been reminiscent of those excursions, or as the composer notes, a “wry commentary on a pedantic Sunday School teacher.”

Fame for Dickinson was indeed “fickle food” (Fr1702, undated). From this cabaret-like setting, one can only imagine what Dickinson would have felt if she had known her poems could be so malleable!

The composer describes “The earth has many keys” (J1775, c. 1885) as a “sound world.” Here he deftly captures the musical intangibles that Dickinson often articulated in her poems, such as “That Phraseless Melody—” (Fr 334), or “I shall bring a fuller tune—” (Fr270).

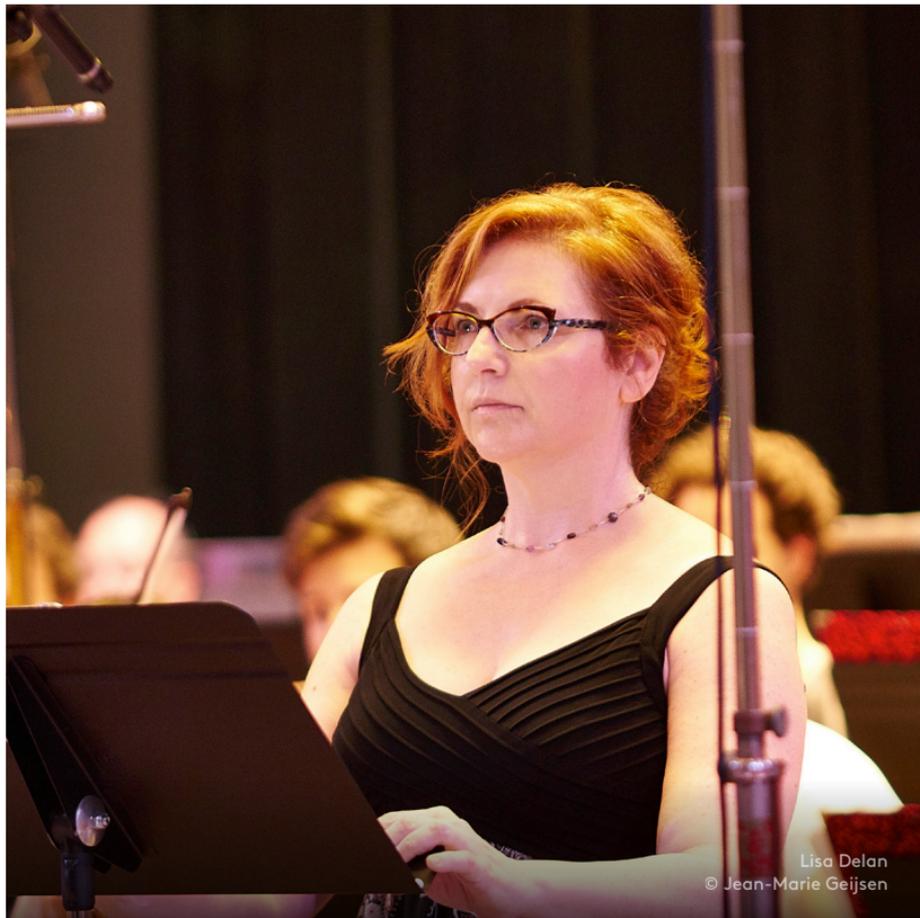
For the poem “Take all away from me” (Fr1671, c. 1885), which Dickinson wrote one year before her death, the composer imagines Dickinson outside

alone in nature, certain of herself and her identity. This setting is a fitting conclusion to this cycle and to this recording. Perhaps Dickinson no longer hears “the noise in the pool at noon” that so occupied her as a young musician and poet. Those sounds are now a permanent part of her lyric fabric, which the rich and imaginative settings and performances on this recording beautifully convey.

George Boziwick

Sources:

Copland, Aaron. *Copland Since 1943*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989.
(Fr): Franklin, Ralph W., ed. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. 3 vols. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998.
(J): Johnson, Thomas H. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1960.
(L): Johnson, Thomas H. *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. 3 vols. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958.



Lisa Delan Soprano

American soprano Lisa Delan has won acclaim as an interpreter of a vast range of repertoire and is recognized for her versatility and breadth of accomplishment.

Ms. Delan has performed on some of the world's leading concert stages including Lincoln Center, Davies Symphony Hall, Madrid's Auditorio Nacional, the Moscow Conservatory, Tchaikovsky Hall; and in a special appearance at Windsor Castle. Her festival appearances include the Bad Kissingen Festival in Germany, Colmar Festival in France, Domaine Forget Festival in Quebec, Rachmaninoff Festival in Novgorod, Russia, the Tuscan Sun Festival, and Festival Napa Valley.

Ms. Delan first won recognition in 1998 singing the title role in the world

premiere of Gordon Getty's *Joan and the Bells* (2002, PENTATONE), a role she has since reprised in France, Germany, Mexico, Spain, Russia and the U.S.

This recording continues Ms. Delan's unique contributions to the "Art Song" genre and her commitment to collaborating with living composers, which began with the release of *And If the Song be Worth a Smile*. That 2009 PENTATONE recording features the work of William Bolcom, John Corigliano, David Garner, Gordon Getty, Jake Heggie and Luna Pearl Woolf.

Ms. Delan revisited the same six composers in her 2013 PENTATONE recording *The Hours Begin to Sing*. An *Audiophile Audition* critic wrote, "I reviewed Lisa Delan's first issue in this series in 2009... I said then 'I am not sure I have heard a finer American song album since *Songs of America* made

its debut [20] years ago.' Well, guess what? I can say it again, with a lot of confidence. ... Lisa Delan is still the master of this sort of recital."

2013 also brought *Angel Heart, a music storybook* (Oxingale Records), created by Ms. Delan and composer Luna Pearl Woolf, with an original story by best-selling author Cornelia Funke. The family-oriented project has been lauded by *The Wall Street Journal*, *Publishers Weekly* and *The New York Times*.

Ms. Delan reached a new level of artistry with *Out of the Shadows: Rediscovered American Art Songs*, which PENTATONE released in spring 2016. *Opera News* said Ms. Delan "brings to these works an almost evangelical commitment and appreciation, which makes the texts and vocal lines sometimes feel rediscovered, even newly minted."

With this recording, Lisa Delan is pleased to return to the poetry of Emily Dickinson, which she initially explored in her album *The White Election* (2009, PENTATONE).

www.lisadelan.com

Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille

In 1965, when the ORTF Regional Orchestra was dissolved, the City of Marseille decided to create the Orchestre de l'Opéra de Marseille. In 1981, the new director of music János Fűrŕst launched a campaign to create l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille, and it is thanks to the exclusive support of the municipality that the staff was then expanded to 88 musicians. Since then, l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille has aimed to disseminate not only the great works of the classical



Lisa Delan
Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille
Lawrence Foster
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and romantic repertoire, but also to pay tribute to 20th-century composers such as Messiaen, Tomasi, Lesur, Chaynes, Dutilleux, Florentz, Charpentier, Barber, Bernstein, Gershwin and Leon. The orchestra has worked together with famous conductors such as Jean-Claude Casadesus, Armin Jordan, Evelino Pidó and Nello Santi, as well as internationally renowned soloists such as Roberto Alagna, Patrizia Ciofi, Angela Georghiu, Ludovic Tézier, Olga Borodina, Mireille Delunsch, Natalie Dessay, Renaud and Gautier Capuçon, Brigitte Engerer and José van Dam. In addition, the orchestra participates in outreach offered by the Opéra towards young audiences, schoolchildren, students and those with disabilities. It also collaborates with other theaters and festivals and has participated in several television productions. Since February 2012, Lawrence Foster has been the Music Director of l'Orchestre

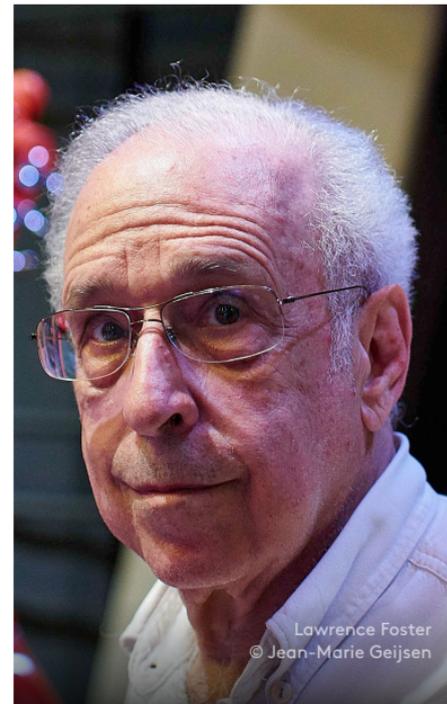
Philharmonique de Marseille , giving a new impetus to the orchestral phalanx.

Together with Maestro Foster, the orchestra performed in China and at the Bad Kissingen festival in 2014 and 2016. Since 2015, the orchestra has played at the Festival International de Piano de la Roque d'Anthéron every summer, and occasionally at Chorégies d'Orange. In the summers of 2016 and 2017, the orchestra participated in two other PENTATONE recordings: *Martinů Double Concertos* and *Mephistopheles and Other Bad Guys* (both to be released in 2018).

Lawrence Foster Conductor

Conductor Lawrence Foster has been Music Director of l'Opéra de Marseille and l'Orchestre Philharmonique de Marseille since 2012. Previously he has held Music Directorships with the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona, Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne.

Mr. Foster is frequently invited to work with internationally renowned orchestras such as Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Montréal Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen Philharmonic, Konzerthausorchester Berlin as well as orchestras in Cologne, Frankfurt, Budapest, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. He has deep musical friendships with outstanding soloists such as Evgeny



Kissin, Arcadi Volodos, and Arabella Steinbacher.

In addition to highly successful productions in Marseille, he regularly conducts at the opera houses in Frankfurt, Hamburg, San Francisco and Monte Carlo. With great success he led a concert performance of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler* at the Enescu Festival in Bucharest and a production of *La Traviata* at the Savonlinna Opera Festival.

Following a fruitful decade-long tenure as Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Mr. Foster was appointed Conductor Laureate. International tours have led him and the orchestra to Germany, Spain, Brazil, as well as to important festivals such as Kissinger Sommer, many times with famous soloists like Lang Lang.

Mr. Foster's discography includes a number of highly acclaimed recordings for PENTATONE, notably of violin works with Arabella Steinbacher as well as of Bartók's *Two Portraits*, Ligeti's *Romanian Concerto*, Kodály's *Dances of Galánta* and *Háry János Suite*, the Four Symphonies by *Robert Schumann* with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and Strauss's *Zigeunerbaron* with NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover.

Born in 1941 in Los Angeles to Romanian parents, Lawrence Foster has been a major champion of the music of George Enescu - he was decorated for his merits to Romanian music by the Romanian President.

Aaron Copland

Aaron Copland was one of the most respected and influential composers of the 20th Century. Among his most notable works are *Appalachian Spring*, for which he won a Pulitzer Prize, *Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, *A Lincoln Portrait*, *El Salón México*, and his opera *The Tender Land*. Copland's distinctive, expressive style epitomized American modernism, and his work helped define American music as a unique classification within the genre of classical music. He was also known as a respected critic, writer and conductor, and was an important composition teacher.

Jake Heggie

Jake Heggie is the composer of the operas *Dead Man Walking* (libretto by Terrence McNally), *Moby-Dick* (Gene Scheer), *It's A Wonderful Life* (Scheer), *Great Scott* (McNally), *Three Decembers* (Scheer), *Two Remain* (Scheer), and *If I Were You* (Scheer). His compositions have been performed extensively on five continents with major opera productions in San Francisco, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Dallas, London, Dresden, Vienna, Madrid, Sydney and Copenhagen. "Arguably the world's most popular 21st century opera and art song composer." (The Wall Street Journal)

www.jakeheggie.com



Gordon Getty

Gordon Getty's works have been performed at New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre and Tchaikovsky Hall, London's Royal Festival Hall and Vienna's Brahmsaal. His three operas (*Plump Jack*, *Usher House* and *The Canterville Ghost*) have been produced in New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Cardiff and Leipzig. PENTATONE has recorded many of his compositions. Recordings include his operas; albums of his choral, orchestral and piano works; and *The White Election*, a much-performed song cycle on poems by Emily Dickinson, featuring soprano Lisa Delan. Getty is the subject of the documentary *There Will Be Music*.

www.gordongetty.com

Michael Tilson Thomas

Michael Tilson Thomas is Music Director of the San Francisco Symphony, Founder and Artistic Director of the New World Symphony, and Conductor Laureate of the London Symphony Orchestra. In addition to conducting the world's leading orchestras, MTT is also noted for his work as a composer and a producer of multimedia projects that are dedicated to music education and the reimagining of the concert experience. He has won eleven Grammys for his recordings, is the recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and is a Chevalier dans l'ordre des Arts et des Lettres of France.

www.michaeltilsonthomas.com



Michael Tilson Thomas & Lisa Delan
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Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson (1948/1950)

Nature, the gentlest mother

1

Nature, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest, -
Her admonition mild

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

In forest and the hill
By traveler is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon, -
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

With infinite affection
And infinite care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

There came a wind like a bugle

2

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass
We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.
On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,

And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day.
The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

The world feels dusty

3

The world feels dusty
When we stop to die;
We want the dew then,
Honors taste dry.

Cools like the rain.

Flags vex a dying face,
But the least fan
Stirred by a friend's hand

Mine be the ministry
When thy thirst comes,
Dews of thyself to fetch
And holy balms.

Heart, we will forget him

4

Heart, we will forget him!
You and I, to-night!
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

Dear March, come in!

5

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat -
You must have walked -
How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with
me,
I have so much to tell!

I got your letter, and the bird's;
The maples never knew
That you were coming, - I declare,
How red their faces grew!
But, March, forgive me -
And all those hills
You left for me to hue;
There was no purple suitable,
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? That April!
Lock the door!
I will not be pursued!
He stayed away a year, to call

When I am occupied.
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come,
And* blame is just as dear as praise
And praise as mere as blame.

*Composer changed "That" from the original
poem to "And."

Sleep is supposed to be

6

Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Morning has not occurred!
That shall aurora be
East of eternity;

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand!

One with the banner gay,
One in the red array, -
That is the break of day.

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree,
The breaking of the day.

Going to Heaven!

7

Going to Heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how, -
Indeed, I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to Heaven! -
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first,
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

I'm glad I don't believe it,
for it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!
I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

The Chariot

8

Because I would not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children
played,
Their lessons scarcely done;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Jake Heggie (b. 1961)
Newer Every Day (2014)

Songs for Kiri

"We turn not older with the years, but newer every day."
-Emily Dickinson

Silence

9

Silence is all we dread.
There's Ransom in a Voice -
But Silence is Infinity.
Himself have not a face.

I'm Nobody! Who are you?

10

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you - Nobody - Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise - you know!

How dreary - to be - Somebody!
How public - like a Frog -
To tell one's name - the livelong June -
To an admiring Bog!

Fame

11

Fame is a bee.
It has a song -
It has a wing -
Ah, too, it has a sting.*

*The last words of the last two lines of the original poem were interchanged by the composer.

That I did always love

12

That I did always love
I bring thee Proof
That till I loved
I never lived - Enough -

This - dost thou doubt - Sweet -
Then have I
Nothing to show
But Calvary -

That I shall love alway -
I argue thee
That love is life -
And life hath Immortality -

Goodnight

13

Some say goodnight - at night -
I say goodnight by day -
Good-bye - the Going utter me -
Goodnight, I still reply -

For parting, that is night,
And presence, simply dawn -
Itself, the purple on the height
Denominated morn.

Look back on Time, with kindly eyes -
He doubtless did his best -
How softly sinks that trembling sun
In Human Nature's West -

Gordon Getty (b. 1933) Four Dickinson Songs (2008)

Safe in Their Alabaster Chambers

14

Safe in their alabaster chambers,
Untouched by morning and untouched
by noon,
Sleep the meek members of the
Resurrection,
Rafters of satin, and roof of stone.

Grand go the years in the crescent
above them,
Worlds scoop their arcs, and
firmaments row,
Diadems drop and Doges surrender,
Soundless as dots on a disc of snow.

A Bird Came Down the Walk

15

A bird came down the walk.
He did not know I saw.
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sideways to the wall

To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all around,
They looked like frightened beads, I
thought;
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger, cautious,
I offered him a crumb.
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam.
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, plashless, as they swim.

There's a Certain Slant of Light

16

There's a certain slant of light,
Winter afternoons,
That oppresses, like the heft
Of cathedral tunes.

When it comes, the landscape listens,
Shadows hold their breath;
When it goes, 'tis like the distance
On the look of death.

*Composer changed "may" from the original poem to "can."

Heavenly hurt it gives us;
We can find no scar,
But internal difference,
Where the meanings are.

None can* teach it any.
'Tis the seal despair,
An imperial affliction
Sent us of the air.

17

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me.
The carriage held but just ourselves
And immortality.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling in the ground.
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice in the ground.

We slowly drove. He knew no haste.
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

We passed the school where children
strove
At recess in the ring.
We passed the fields of gazing grain.
We passed the setting sun.

Or rather, he passed us.
The dews drew quivering and chill,
For only gossamer my gown,
My tippet only tulle.

Michael Tilson Thomas (b.1944)

Poems of Emily Dickinson, selections (2001)

Down Time's Quaint Stream

18

Down Time's quaint stream
Without an oar
We are enforced to sail
Our Port a secret
Our Perchance a Gale.

What Skipper would
Incur the Risk
What Buccaneer would ride
Without a surety from the Wind
Or schedule of the Tide -

The Bible

19

The Bible is an antique Volume -
Written by faded Men
At the suggestion of Holy Spectres -
Subjects - Bethlehem -
Eden - the ancient Homestead -
Satan - the Brigadier -
Judas - the great Defaulter -
David - the Troubadour -
Sin - a distinguished Precipice

Others must resist -
Boys that "believe" are very lonesome -
Other Boys are "lost."
Had but the tale a warbling Teller -
All the Boys would come -
Orpheus' Sermon captivated,
It did not condemn -

Fame

20

Fame is a fickle food
Upon a shifting plate,
Whose table once a
Guest, but not
The second time, is set.

Whose crumbs the crows inspect,
And with ironic caw
Flap past it to the
Farmer's corn;
Men eat of it and die.

The Earth Has Many Keys

21

The earth has many keys,
Where melody is not
Is the unknown peninsula.
Beauty is nature's fact.

But witness for her land,
And witness for her sea,
The cricket is her utmost
Of elegy to me.

Take All Away From Me

22

Take all away from me, but leave me
Ecstasy,
And I am richer* than all my Fellow Men -
Ill it becometh me to dwell so wealthily
When at my very Door are those

possessing more,
In abject poverty -

*The composer omitted "then" from the line in the original poem: "And I am richer than than all my Fellow Men -"

All poems are printed here as the composers have set them in the published scores.
Any significant alterations within the settings have been noted.

Publishers:

Aaron Copland - *Eight Poems of Emily Dickinson*

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Gordon Getty - *Four Dickinson Songs*

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Michael Tilson Thomas - *Poems of Emily Dickinson*

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Writing desk in Emily Dickinson's bedroom (reproduction)
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Acknowledgments

PRODUCTION TEAM

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This album was recorded at Friche la Belle de Mai, Marseille, June and July 2017

Special thanks to George Boziwick for his fine essay on Emily Dickinson and her relationship with music. George Boziwick has written extensively about Emily Dickinson and music. Boziwick is an active member of the Emily Dickinson International Society, and currently on the EDIS board. A librarian, composer and musicologist, he is the former Chief of the Music Division of The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. He is co-founder with Trudy Williams of The Red Skies Music Ensemble, presenting lecture/performances on Emily Dickinson and music. www.TheRedSkiesMusicEnsemble.com

It was an unexpected gift for Jane Wald, the executive director of the Emily Dickinson Museum, to have the writing desk in Emily's bedroom photographed for the cover of this recording, and it is deeply appreciated. The picture of the sun passing behind the curtains gave us the perfect slant of light.

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