



eVOCO @10
Mixed Ensemble

Considering Matthew Shepard

Saturday June 8th @ 8pm

Sunday June 9th @ 4pm

Malverne High School Performing Arts Center
80 Ocean Avenue, Malverne, NY

PROGRAM NOTES

Throughout our rehearsal process of *Considering Matthew Shepard*, the ensemble and I have found both of the following to be true: The subject matter of Craig Hella Johnson's extraordinary fusion oratorio is incontrovertibly heavy and tragic; and, Craig's nuanced and profound response to Matt's story brings us to a place of fervent and undeniable hopefulness each time we experience it.

The composer himself states, "Matt Shepard and his story have led me on an inspiring, challenging and deeply meaningful journey that I continue to this day. In composing *Considering Matthew Shepard* I wanted to create, within a musical framework, a space for reflection, consideration, and unity around his life and legacy."

This space for reflection is created to be unreservedly welcoming for all. The unity hoped for is, of course, still sadly elusive. Craig's imagined world, however, is aspirational. His marriage of music and poetry weaves Gregorian chant, rock, musical theater, the blues, gospel, and any number of other styles into a seamless and convincing whole. Poets Hildegard von Bingen to Lesléa Newman to Michael Dennis Browne sit alongside Matthew's journal entries and interviews of his parents, Judy and Dennis.

As Craig writes early on in the Prologue, "We tell each other stories so that we will remember." We invite you, each, to listen. Be open; consider Matthew's story. Then meet us here, "where the old fence ends and the horizon begins."

May our song be our sight.

-Dave Fryling

TW: Please note this piece includes direct quotes of the bigoted words of Westboro Baptist Church members. It also discusses death and dying. Your safety and wellbeing are very important to us; you may feel free step out into the lobby at any point for a moment to process.

This program is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant Program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, and administered by The Huntington Arts Council.



CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD

Craig Hella Johnson

PROLOGUE

Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass
Ordinary Boy
We Tell Each Other Stories

PASSION

The Fence (before)
The Fence (that night)
A Protestor
Keep It Away From Me (The Wound of Love)
Fire of the Ancient Heart
Stray Birds
We Are All Sons
I Am Like You / We Are All Sons (reprise)
The Innocence
The Fence (one week later)
Stars
In Need of Breath
Gently Rest (Deer Lullaby)
Deer Song (Mist on the Mountains)
The Fence (after) / The Wind
Pilgrimage

EPILOGUE

Meet Me Here
Thank You
All of Us
Reprise: This Chant of Life (Cattle, Horses, Sky, & Grass)

PROLOGUE

Matthew (Daniel Santangelo)

*Yoodle—ooh, yoodle-ooh-hoo, so sings a lone cowboy,
Who with the wild roses wants you to be free.*

CATTLE, HORSES, SKY AND GRASS

Chorus

Cattle, horses, sky and grass
These are the things that sway and pass
Before our eyes and through our dreams
Through shiny, sparkly, golden gleams
Within our psyche that find and know
The value of this special glow
That only gleams for those who bleed
Their soul and heart and utter need
Into the mighty, throbbing Earth
Into the mighty, throbbing Earth
From which springs life and death and birth.

*I'm alive! I'm alive, I'm alive,
golden. I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive...*

These cattle, horses, grass, and sky
Dance and dance and never die
They circle through the realms of air
And ground and empty spaces where
A human being can join the song
Can circle, too, and not go wrong
Amidst the natural, pulsing forces
Of sky and grass and cows and horses.

I'm alive, I'm alive, I'm alive...

*These are the things that sway and pass
Dance and Circle*

This chant of life cannot be heard
It must be felt, there is no word
To sing that could express the true
Significance of how we wind
Through all these hoops of Earth and mind
Through all these hoops of Earth and mind
Through horses, cattle, sky and grass
And all these things that sway and pass.

...continued

PROLOGUE

*Dance and sway and pass...
These are the things that sway and pass*

ORDINARY BOY

Narrator (Andrea Galeno)
Let's talk about Matt

Ordinary boy, ordinary boy, ordinary boy...

Born in December in Casper, Wyoming

Ordinary boy

to a father, Dennis
and a mother, Judy

Ordinary boy, ordinary boy

Then came a younger brother, Logan

Ordinary boy

His name was Matthew Wayne Shepard.
And one day his name came to be known
around the world. But as his mother said:

Judy (Jane Park)
You knew him as Matthew. To us he was Matt.

Chorus

He went camping,
he went fishing, even hunting for a moose
He read plays and he read stories and especially Dr. Seuss
He wrote poems with illustrations for the neighbors on the street
And he left them in each mailbox till he learned it was illegal
He made friends and he wore braces and his frame was rather small
He sang songs his father taught him
Frere Jacques...
Row Row Row Your Boat...
Twinkle Twinkle Little Star...

PROLOGUE

Judy

He was my son, my first-born, and more. He was my friend, my confidant, my constant reminder of how good life can be—and...how hurtful.

How good life can be, how good life can be

Matt's laugh, his wonderful hugs, his stories...

Narrator

Matt writes about himself in a notebook:

Matthew (Jahlil Burke)

I am funny, sometimes forgetful and messy and lazy. I am not a lazy person though. I am giving and understanding. And formal and polite. I am sensitive. I am honest. I am sincere. And I am not a pest.

I am not a pest, I am not a pest...not a pest!

I am my own person. I am warm. I want my life to be happy and I want to be clearer about things. I want to feel good. I love Wyoming...I love Wyoming very much.

I love Wyoming

I love Wyoming

I love Wyoming very so much...

I love theatre

I love good friends

I love succeeding

I love pasta

I love jogging

I love walking and feeling good

Chorus

I love Europe and driving and music and helping and smiling and Charlie and Jeopardy. I love movies and eating and positive people and pasta and driving and walking and jogging and kissing and learning and airports and music and smiling and hugging and being myself. I love theatre! I love theatre!

PROLOGUE

Matthew (Tyler Humphrey)
And I love to be on stage!

Chorus

How I love the stage...

Such an ordinary boy living ordinary days
In an ordinary life so worth living
He felt ordinary yearning and ordinary fears
With an ordinary hope for belonging

He felt ordinary yearning and ordinary fears
With an ordinary hope for belonging
(Born to live this ordinary life)

Just an ordinary boy living ordinary days with
extraordinary kindness
extraordinary laughter extraordinary shining
extraordinary light and joy
Joy and light.

I love, I love, I love...
I love, I love, I love...

Ordinary boy, ordinary boy.

WE TELL EACH OTHER STORIES

Narrator (Kyla Surajbali)

We tell each other stories so that we will remember
Try and find the meaning in the living of our days

Always telling stories, wanting to remember
Where and whom we came from
Who we are

Sometimes there's a story that's painful to remember
One that breaks the heart of us all
Still we tell the story
We're listening and confessing
What we have forgotten
In the story of us all
We tell each other stories so that we will remember
Trying to find the meaning...

PROLOGUE

Chorus

*I am open to hear this story..
about a boy, an ordinary boy
Who never had expected his life would be this story,
(could be any boy)*

*I am open to hear a story, I am open to hear a story.
Open, listen. Open, listen.
All.*

PASSION

RECITATION I (Quinn McClure)

Laramie, southeastern Wyoming, between the Snowy Range and the Laramie Range. Tuesday, October 6, 1998

THE FENCE (BEFORE)

Fence (Karl Huth)

Out and alone
on the endless empty prairie

the moon bathes me
the stars bless me

the sun warms me
the wind soothes me

*Still, still, still...I wonder.
Still, still, still...I wonder.*

will I always be out here
exposed and alone?

will I ever know why
I was put (here) on this earth?

will somebody someday
stumble upon me?

will anyone remember me
after I'm gone?

...continued

PASSION

Still, still, still...I wonder.

Still, still, still...I wonder.

will I always be out here
exposed and alone?

will anyone remember me
after I'm gone?

Still, still, still...I wonder.

Still, still, still...I wonder.

RECITATION II (Elena Blyskal)

Tuesday night. Matthew attended a meeting of the University of Wyoming's Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Association, then joined others for coffee at the College Inn.

Around 10:30, he went to the Fireside Bar, where he later met Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson. Near midnight, they drove him to a remote area, tied him to a split-rail fence, beat him horribly, and left him to die in the cold of night.

THE FENCE (THAT NIGHT)

Chorus

*Most noble evergreen with your roots in the sun:
you shine in the cloudless sky of a sphere no earthly eminence can grasp,
You blush like the dawn,
you burn like a flame of the sun.*

Fence (Max Denler)

He was heavy as a broken heart
Tears fell from his unblinking eyes
He was dead weight, yet he kept breathing

He was heavy as a broken heart
His own heart wouldn't stop beating
The cold wind wouldn't stop blowing
His face streaked with moonlight and blood
I tightened my grip and held on

The cold wind wouldn't stop blowing
We were out on the prairie alone
I tightened my grip and held on
I saw what was done to this child

PASSION

We were out on the prairie alone
Their truck was the last thing he saw
I saw what was done to this child
I cradled him just like a mother

RECITATION III (Emily Ilson)

The next morning, Matthew was found by a cyclist, a fellow student, who at first thought he was a scarecrow. After several days in a coma and on life support, Matthew Shepard died on Monday, October 12, 12:53 a.m. At the funeral, which took place on Friday, October 16, at St Mark's Episcopal Church in Casper, Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church protested outside.

A PROTESTOR

Chorus

kreuzige, kreuzige!
(translation: crucify, crucify)

A boy who takes a boy to bed?
Where I come from that's not polite
He asked for it, you got that right
The fires of Hell burn hot and red
The only good fag is a fag that's dead

A man and a woman, the Good Lord said
As sure as Eve took that first bite
The fires of Hell burn hot and red

kreuzige, kreuzige!

Beneath the Hunter's Moon he bled
That must have been a pretty sight
The fires of Hell burn hot and red

C'mon, kids, it's time for bed
Say your prayers, kiss Dad good night
A boy who takes a boy to bed?
The fires of Hell burn hot and red

crucify, crucify...the light
Crucify the light...

PASSION

KEEP IT AWAY FROM ME (THE WOUND OF LOVE)

Soloist (Courtney Cox)
don't wanna look on this
never get near
flames too raw for me
grief too deep
keep it away from me

Trio (Joslyn Thomas, Taina Brantley, Natalia Antkowiak)
stay out of my heart
stay out of my hope

some son, somebody's pain
some child gone
child never mine
born to this trouble
don't wanna be born to this world
world where sometimes yes
world where mostly no
the wound of love
the wound of love

smoke round my throat
rain down my soul
no heaven lies
keep them gone
keep them gone
keep them never
grief too deep, flames too raw
keep them away from me
stay out of my heart
stay out of my hope

don't try
any old story on me
don't even try
no wing no song
no cry no comfort ye
no wound ever mine
close up...
close up...
close...
close up the gates of night

PASSION

the wound of love
keep this all away from me
 the wound of love
 you take away
 the wounds of the world
keep it away from me

RECITATION IV (Sydney Hankins-Wright)

National media began to broadcast the story. As the news began to spread, many people across the country gathered together in candlelight vigils, moved to (silently) speak for life over death, love over hate, light over darkness.

FIRE OF THE ANCIENT HEART

Cantor 1 (Max Denler)

*"What have you done? Hark, thy brother's blood
cries to me from the ground."*

Chorus

Called by this candle
Led to the flame
Called to remember
Enter the flame

Cantor 1

all our flames now
swaying and free
all our hearts now
moving as one
every living spirit
turned toward peace
all our tender
hopes awake

Chorus

Called by this candle
Led to the flame
Called to remember
Enter the flame

PASSION

Cantor 1 **Chorus**
Fire: *howl*
Fire: *broken*
Fire: *burst*
Fire: *rage*
Fire: *swell*
Fire: *shatter*
Fire: *wail*

Fire

Chorus

We all betray the ancient heart.
Ev'ry one of us, all of us.
His heart, my heart, your heart, one heart.
In each moment the fire rages, it will burn away a hundred veils.

Burning Breaking Grasping Raging

Cantor 2 (Brodie Centauro)

*How do we keep these flames in our hands?
How do we guard these fears in our hearts?
How long to hold these griefs in our songs?*

*Remembering anger, weave it with hope.
Remembering exile, braid it with praise.
Longing past horror
Longing past dread.
Dreaming of healing
Past all our pain.*

Chorus

Fire: **living in me**
Fire: **purify**
Fire: **now hold me**
Fire: **seize my heart**

*(enter the flame, enter the flame
shatter my heart, shatter my heart
called to enter, burn a hundred veils)*

Called by this flame
Fire of my heart:
Break down all walls
Open all doors
Only this Love

PASSION

“Eyes of flesh, eyes of fire”

Lumina, lumina, lumina
Open us,
All!

Cantor 1

(In each moment the fire rages, it will burn away a hundred veils.)

RECITATION V (Tony DiTaranto)

Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson were arrested shortly after the attack and charged with murder, kidnapping, and aggravated robbery. The first of two trials began on October 26, 1999; both were convicted of the murder and sentenced to two consecutive life sentences.

STRAY BIRDS

Bass & Tenor Chorus

Stray birds of summer come to my window to sing and fly away.
And yellow leaves of autumn which have no songs flutter and
fall there with a sigh.
Once we dreamt that we were strangers.
We wake up to find that we were dear to each other

we are all sons of fathers and mothers
we are all sons

we are all rivers
the roar of waters, we are all sons

I AM LIKE YOU

Quartet (Doreen Fryling, Melody Mercieca, Jason Belanger, Connor Martin)
I am like you

Aaron

and Russell

When I think of you (and honestly I don't like to think about you)
but sometimes I do,

I am so horrified, and just so angry and confused (and scared)

that you could do things to another boy—they were so cruel and

so undeserved, so dark and hard and full of (I don't know) ...continued

PASSION

Late one night I had a glimpse
of something I recognized, just a tiny glimpse—
I don't even like to say this out loud,
it isn't even all that true—
but I wondered for a moment,
am I like you? (in any way)

(I pray the answer is no)
Am I like you?
I bet you once had hopes and dreams, too.

Some things we love get lost along the way,
That's just like me—get lost along the way—
I am like you, I get confused and I'm afraid
and I've been reckless, I've been restless, bored,
unthinking, listless, intoxicated,
I've come unhinged,
and made mistakes
and hurt people very much.

Sometimes I feel (in springtime, in early afternoon)
the sunshine warm on my face;
you feel this too (don't you?),
the sunshine warm on your face.

I am like you
(this troubles me)
I am like you
(just needed to say this)

Some things we love get lost along the way.

WE ARE ALL SONS

Bass & Tenor Chorus

we are all sons of fathers and mothers
we are all sons

we are all rivers the roar of waters
we are all sons

sometimes no home for us here on the earth
no place to lay our heads

we are all sons of fathers and mothers

PASSION

we are all sons

if you could know for one moment
how it is to live in our bodies
within the world

if you could know

you ask too much of us
you ask too little

THE INNOCENCE

Dennis (Alex Plotkin)

When I think of all the times the world was ours for dreaming,
When I think of all the times the earth seemed like our home-
Every heart alive with its own longing,
Every future we could ever hope to hold.

All the times our laughter rang in summer,
All the times the rivers sang our tune-
Was there already sadness in the sunlight?
Some stormy story waiting to be told?

*Where O where has the innocence gone?
Where O where has it gone?
Rains rolling down wash away my memory;
Where O where has it gone?*

When I think of all the joys, the times we remember
All the treasures we believed we'd never ever lose.
Too many days gone by without their meaning,
Too many darkened hours without their peace.

*Where O where has the innocence gone?
Where O where has it gone?
Vows we once swore, now it's just this letting go,
Where O where has it gone?*

PASSION

RECITATION VI (Alex Schirling)

In the days and weeks after Matthew's death, many people came to the fence to pay homage and pray and grieve.

THE FENCE (ONE WEEK LATER)

Fence (Christina Russo)

I keep still
I stand firm
I hold my ground
while they lay down

Chorus

flowers and photos
prayers and poems
crystals and candles
sticks and stones

Fence

they come in herds
they stand and stare
they sit and sigh
they crouch and cry

Chorus

flowers and photos
prayers and poems
crystals and candles
sticks and stones

Fence

some of them touch me
in unexpected ways
without asking permission
and then move on

but I don't mind
being a shrine
is better than being
the scene of the crime

PASSION

RECITATION VII (Elena Blyskal)

Matthew's father made his statement to the court on November 5, 1999.

STARS

Dennis (Alex Schirling)

By the end of the beating, his body was just trying to survive. You left him out there by himself, but he wasn't alone. There were his lifelong friends with him—friends that he had grown up with. You're probably wondering who these friends were. First, he had the beautiful night sky with the same stars and moon that we used to look at through a telescope. Then, he had the daylight and the sun to shine on him one more time—one more cool, wonderful autumn day in Wyoming. His last day alive in Wyoming. His last day alive in the state that he always proudly called home. And through it all he was breathing in for the last time the smell of Wyoming sagebrush and the scent of pine trees from the snowy range. He heard the wind—the ever-present Wyoming wind—for the last time. He had one more friend with him. One he grew to know through his time in Sunday school and as an acolyte at St. Mark's in Casper as well as through his visits to St. Matthew's in Laramie. I feel better knowing he wasn't alone.

Chorus (under spoken text above)

Stars

across

scattered

the

sky

in

blinking

dismay

unable

being

to help

light

years

away

PASSION

RECITATION VIII (Elena Blyskal)

Matthew was left tied to the fence for almost eighteen hours.

IN NEED OF BREATH

Matthew (Joseph Anthony Smith)

My heart

Is an unset jewel

Upon the tender night

Yearning for its dear old friend

The Moon.

When the Nameless One debuts again

Ten thousand facets of my being unfurl wings

And reveal such a radiance inside

I enter a realm divine —

I too begin to sweetly cast light,

Like a lamp,

I cast light

Through the streets of this

World.

My heart is an unset jewel

Upon existence

Waiting for the Friend's touch.

Tonight

Tonight

My heart is an unset ruby

Offered bowed and weeping to the Sky.

I am dying in these cold hours

For the resplendent glance of God.

My heart

Is an unset jewel

Upon the tender night

My heart is an unset ruby

Offered bowed and weeping to the Sky.

PASSION

GENTLY REST

Chorus

Gently rest now, you the child of angels
Spirit shining, resting in creation
Universe is holding you so deeply
Gently rest now, you the child of angels

Deer beside you, hear your brother breathing
With you always in your starry shelter
Dreaming in the holy home of wonder
Universe is holding you so deeply
Light of every sun you felt around you
Blessing bringing our own hearts of longing
Spirit sleeping in the arms of ages
Gently rest now, you the child of angels

Universe now dreaming you so deeply
Spirit shining, home within creation
Dreaming in eternal light of wonder
Gently rest now, you the child of angels
Spirit sleeping in the arms of angels
Gently rest...

RECITATION IX (Jason Belanger)

Sheriff's Deputy, Reggie Fluty, the first to report to the scene, told Judy Shepard that as she ran to the fence she saw a large doe lying near Matt—as if the deer had been keeping him company all through the night.

DEER SONG

Trio (Doreen Fryling, Christina Regan, Elena Blyskal)
Ah...

Deer (Treble Chorus)

A mist is over the mountain,
The stars in their meadows upon the air,
Your people are waiting below them,
And you know there's a gathering there.
All night I lay there beside you,
I cradled your pain in my care,
We move through creation together,
And we know there's a welcoming there

...continued

PASSION

Welcome, welcome, sounds the song,
Calling, calling clear;
Always with us, evergreen heart,
Where can we be but there?

Matthew (Treble Chorus)

I'll find all the love I have longed for,
The home that's been calling my heart so long
So soon I'll be cleansed in those waters,
My fevers forever be gone;
Where else on earth but these waters?
No more, no more to be torn;
My own ones, my dearest, are waiting —
And I'll weep to be where I belong.

Welcome, welcome, sounds the song,
Calling, calling clear;
Always with me, evergreen heart,
Where can I be but here?

RECITATION X (Tony DiTaranto)

The fence has been torn down.

The Fence (after) / The Wind

prayed upon
frowned upon

revered
feared

adored
abhorred

despised
idolized

splintered
scarred

weathered
worn

broken down
broken up

PASSION

ripped apart
ripped away

gone
but not forgotten

The North Wind
carried his father's laugh
The South Wind
carried his mother's song
The East Wind
carried his brother's cheer
The West Wind
carried his lover's moan
The Winds of the World
wove together a prayer
to carry that hurt boy home

prayed upon
frowned upon

revered
feared

North Wind, South Wind, East Wind, West Wind

(Splintered, scarred, weathered, worn, broken down, gone)

Winds of the World: carry him home.

PILGRIMAGE

Chorus

I walk to the fence with beauty before me
The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want

I walk to the fence with beauty behind me
Yit'gadal v'yit' kadash (may his great name grow)

I walk to the fence with beauty above me
Om Mani Padme Ham (Om! the jewel in the lotus, hum!)

I walk to the fence with beauty below me
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit...

I reach the fence surrounded by beauty

...continued

PASSION

wail of wind, cry of hawk

I leave the fence surrounded by beauty
sigh of sagebrush, hush of stone

*(Beauty above me, Beauty below me
By beauty surrounded)*

Still, still, still, I wonder...
wail of wind, cry of hawk

Still, still, still, I wonder...
wail of wind, cry of hawk

Still still still

EPILOGUE

MEET ME HERE

Narrator (Andrea Galeno)

Meet me here

Won't you meet me here

Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

There's a balm in the silence

Like an understanding air

Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

We've been walking through the darkness

On this long, hard climb

Carried ancestral sorrow

For too long a time

Will you lay down your burden

Lay it down, come with me

It will never be forgotten

Held in love, so tenderly

Chorus

Meet me here

Won't you meet me here

Where the old fence ends and the horizon begins

There's a joy in the singing

EPILOGUE

*Like an understanding air
Where the fence ends and the horizon begins.*

Then we'll come to the mountain
We'll go bounding to see
That great circle of dancing
And we'll dance endlessly
And we'll dance with the all the children
Who've been lost along the way
We will welcome each other
Coming home, this glorious day

Narrator

*We are home in the mountain
And we'll gently understand
That we've been friends forever
That we've never been alone
We'll sing on through any darkness
And our Song will be our sight
We can learn to offer praise again
Coming home to the light...*

THANK YOU

Choir

*Thank you
Thank you, thank you
Hohou, hohou (Arahapo—thank you)
Yontonwe (Huron—thank you)*

Voice 1 (Elena Blyskal) & **Voice 2** (Jason Belanger)
even in this rain

signs of You everywhere, signs in the darkness
signs in the fires
signs of You in the hurt streets
signs in the tents, the tunnels
signs of You in the tiniest beating heart
thank you our cry to be sung

even in this rain

out of the mouths of visions torn open
out of abandoned tongues
out of the mouths of children lost in the furnaces

...continued

EPILOGUE

out of the bloody lullabies
out of the beaks of buried eagles
the forests wrapped in rags
wires of lightning loose and writhing
out of skies as stained as the seas
we cry our song to be sung

even in this rain

sit with her now, old earth
hear her stories
all we have already been given
all we have yet to do
on watch
keeping our hands in the wounds

even in this rain

how might we ever say to You
we have ceased to dream
never forgetting
remembering how every breathing remembers
to build the world
thank you our cry to be sung

nobody
no one
turned away no one

nobody
nobody
unworthy

nobody
no one
ashamed

yes each silence
yes each radiance
yes each shadow
yes each praise
mind into heart, each dream walks on

even in this rain

thank you

Hohou, Yontonwe...

Thank you

EPILOGUE

ALL OF US (with the Malverne High School Select Chorus)

Trio (Doreen Fryling, Kyla Surajbali, Christina Russo)

What could be the song?

Where begin again?

Who could meet us there?

Where might we begin?

From the shadows climb,

Rise to sing again;

Where could be the joy?

How do we begin?

Never our despair,

Never the least of us,

Never turn away,

Never hide our face;

Ordinary boy,

Only all of us,

Free us from our fear,

Only all of us.

Chorus

What could be the song?

Where begin again?

Who could meet us there?

Where might we begin?

From the shadows climb,

Rise to sing again;

Where could be the joy?

How do we begin?

Never our despair,

Never the least of us,

Never turn away,

Never hide your face;

Ordinary boy,

Only all of us,

Free us from our fear.

Only in the Love,

Love that lifts us up,

Clear from out the heart

From the mountain's side,

Come creation come,

Strong as any stream;

...continued

EPILOGUE

How can we let go? How can we forgive?
How can we be dream?

Out of heaven, rain,
Rain to wash us free;
Rivers flowing on,
Ever to the sea;
Bind up every wound,
Every cause to grieve;
Always to forgive,
Only to believe.

[Chorale:]

*Most noble Light, Creation's face,
How should we live but joined in you,
Remain within your saving grace
Through all we say and do
And know we are the Love that moves
The sun and all the stars?+
O Love that dwells, O Love that burns
In every human heart.*

Trio

(Only in the Love, Love that lifts us up!)

Chorus

This evergreen, this heart, this soul,
Now moves us to remake our world,
Reminds us how we are to be
Your people born to dream;
How old this joy, how strong this call,
To sing your radiant care
With every voice, in cloudless hope
Of our belonging here.

Only in the Love...
Only all of us...

Trio

(Heaven: Wash me...)

EPILOGUE

Chorus

All of us, only all of us.

What could be the song?

Where do we begin?

Only in the Love, Love that lifts us up.

All of us

All.

REPRISE: THE CHANT OF LIFE (CATTLE, HORSES, SKY AND GRASS)

Chorus

This chant of life cannot be heard

It must be felt, there is no word

To sing that could express the true

Significance of how we wind

Through all these hoops of Earth and mind

Through horses, cattle, sky and grass

And all these things that sway and pass.

Matthew (Daniel Santangelo)

*Yoodle oo, yoodle oo-hoo, so sings the lone cowboy,
who with the wild roses wants you to be free.*

For a comprehensive listing of all featured
voices, please follow this QR code



eVoco Mixed Ensemble



eVoco* Voice Collective is an award winning collection of singers of the highest musical, technical, and expressive abilities whose shared mission is to invite listeners into the extraordinary experience of singing, together. We are passionate advocates for excellence in the choral & vocal art, presenting evocative concerts and recitals of the highest caliber, summoning the power of the human voice to remind us all of our shared human experiences. Our current projects include the Mixed Ensemble, the Women's Ensemble, the Open Door Ensemble, and our Voice Recitals featuring the Young Vocal Artist Award winners. In 2017, the eVoco Mixed Ensemble received the second place award in the national American Prize for Choral Performance—Community Chorus division.

eVoco firmly believes in the transformative and educational power of music, and we welcome everyone to observe our work together. All of our Mixed and Women's Ensemble rehearsals are open to the public. Teachers and students of music, especially, are encouraged to join us throughout the process. Our hope is that our weekly work together will not only prepare us for each concert series, but also—and just as importantly—will serve as a continual learning space for students, educators, and music enthusiasts alike.

**From the Latin evocare [ex- ("out")] vocare ("to call")]: to lure, to summon; to evoke*

eVoco Mixed Ensemble

Soprano 1

Elena Blyskal
Taina Brantley
Christina Dimitriou
Mary Beth Finger
Doreen Fryling
Kyla Surajbali
Leandra Wahlen

Alto 1

Christina Cinnamo
Courtney Cox
Andrea Galeno
Sydney Hankins-Wright
Shoshana Hershkowitz
Maria Rueda
Christina Russo

Tenor 1

Tony DiTaranto
Tyler Humphrey
Luigi Mondì
Daniel Santangelo
Joseph Anthony Smith

Bass 1

Thomas Buzzi
Calob Congdon
Max Denler
AJ France
Alex Plotkin
Alex Schirling
Brian Vollmer

Soprano 2

Vanessa D'Aconti
Victoria Devine
Whitney Hackman
Emily Ilson
Danielle Post
Christina Regan
Kayla Sorensen
Joslyn Thomas

Alto 2

Natalia Antkowiak
Erin Bevan
Jen DeStio
Emily Dimitriou
Quinn McClure
Melody Mercieca
Jane Park

Tenor 2

Steven Altinel
Jason Belanger
Brodie Centauro
Michael Fernandez
Jimmy Gratta

Bass 2

Jared Berry
Jahlil Burke
Paul Ceglio
Karl Huth
Connor Martin

Malverne High School Select Chorus

Kenneth Zagare, director

Soprano

Avery Bjelland
Evelyn Brown
Olivia Brown
Kazuri Harris
Jordan Lewis
Jasmine Lugo
Emily Pierre
Corrin Suchit

Alto

Foluke Awe
Keturah Cesar
Amaya Clement
Meghan Davis
Charisma Fowler
Gabrielle Joseph
Kassandra Maurad
Noelia Taveras

Tenor

Daniel Barron
Jalen Blue
Matthew Dacosta
Jason Diaz
Julien Dumornay
Jayden Jolly
Antwaun Noble
Zamari Paul
Tristan Roberts

Bass

Emmanuel
Adeyemi
Jordan Blue
Ethan Brown
Chris Grieco
Michael Lawless
Lorenzo Maione
Kaiden Ulysse

Instrumentalists

Piano

Brianna Brickman

Viola

Matthew Ryan

Percussion

Josh Perry

Clarinet

KeriAnn DiBari

Cello

Grace Wu Hsu

Guitar

AnnMarie Buonaspina

Violin

Brad Bosenbeck

Bass

Jess Block

Production Team



David Fryling (www.DavidFryling.org) is director of choral activities at Hofstra University, where he conducts the Hofstra Chorale and Hofstra Chamber Choir, teaches beginning and advanced studies in choral conducting, and supervises choral music education student teachers during their field placements. In fall 2014, David was inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame as the "Educator of Note," and in spring 2017, he was awarded The American Prize in Conducting in both the community division and the college and university division.

From 2007 to 2013, David spent his summers as coordinator of the Vocal Artists program at the Interlochen Center for the Arts in Michigan, where he was conductor and music director of the World Youth Honors Choir and Festival Choir & Orchestra. He has since been a frequent guest artist on the conducting faculty of the New York State Summer School of the Arts (NYSSSA) School of Choral Studies and has served on the faculty at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp in Sitka, AK.

In addition to his professional teaching and conducting responsibilities, David is Past President of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Eastern Region, and currently serves as ACDA National President.

Production Team



Brianna Brickman is a music educator, conductor, and collaborative pianist on Long Island. She is the High School Choral Director and Theatre Music Director in the Locust Valley Central School District. Brianna is also an Adjunct Professor at Hofstra University, serving as the director of the undergraduate Hofstra University Chorus.

Whether she is standing among the voices or sitting at the piano, Brianna is deeply honored to be part of the dance.

Director **Ilona Auschuler-Pierce** is the Chair of the Department of Drama and Dance, at Hofstra University. Her specialty is voice and speech for the actor, and she regularly directs in Hofstra's mainstage season. Recent productions include *Into the Woods*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Revolutionists*. Ilona has a BFA in musical theatre from Ithaca College and an MFA in voice and speech from the National Theatre Conservatory in Denver, Colorado. Before she came to Hofstra, Ilona taught on the theatre faculties at Ithaca College and The Hartt School. She appears in a video from Newsday about the Long Island accent that may have passed through your YouTube suggestions.



David Coonan is an accomplished teacher, director, and lighting designer. At Malverne, he directs the high school musical, middle school musical, and summer outdoor musical. Additionally, he serves as lighting designer for all district productions. Favorite directing credits include *Aida*, *Pippin*, *Something Rotten!*, and *Les Miserables*. Mr. Coonan was named the Malverne/West Hempstead Herald's 2022 Person of the Year and has directed and produced over 50 productions. He also serves as the artistic director of the Malverne Community Theatre, a role he has held for 12 years.



Brianne Boyd, sound designer, has been designing and running sound across Long Island in theaters and schools for over twenty years. Favorite audio credits include *Spring Awakening*, *Million Dollar Quartet*, *Bring It On*, *Les Miserables*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the world premiere of *Punk Rock Girl*. Thank you to Christina and Andrea for the opportunity to work on an incredible project. "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." Shameless plug: @MaxineVandateBand

Production Team



Orion Forte, Projection Designer, is honored to be a part of such a special production. Their projection designs have been seen in shows including *Jersey Boys*, *Wizard of Oz* (John W. Engeman Theater); *We Will Rock You* (Timber Lake Playhouse); and *By the Way, Meet Vera Stark* (Hofstra University). They work as John W Engeman's Scenic Charge and their Children's Theater Resident Set Designer. Orion will also be working as the Associate Set Designer for this summer's production of *Legally Blonde*.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Top Shelf Design Studio and Bill Stefanowicz for their graphic design and to our friends who assisted at this concert by helping with tickets and ushering. Thank you to our Malverne venue hosts – Mike Messina, Music Coordinator, and buildings use manager Dan Balvan – for making this production possible. Special and heartfelt thanks to Kenneth Zagare, director of the Malverne High School Select Chorus, and to all the student singers who joined us this evening. And finally, thanks to the Hofstra University Department of Music, Dr. Francesca Cassio, Chair, for your continued support of our mission.

The eVoco Board

Andrea Galeno, *President*
Dory Agazarian, *Development Chair*
Terry Bendel, *Advertising Chair*
Jared Berry, *Treasurer*
Brianna Brickman, *Special Projects Chair*
Vanessa D'Aconti, *Marketing Chair*
Tony DiTaranto, *Member at Large*
Mary Beth Finger, *Secretary*
David Fryling, *Artistic Director*
Sydney Hankins, *Social Chair*
Alex Plotkin, *Manager*
Christina Russo, *Venues Chair*
Brian Vollmer, *Member at Large*

DONORS

PATRON \$1,000+

Janet & David Fryling

PARTNER \$500 - \$999

The DiTaranto Family
Joan Drewes
Elaina Finger
David & Doreen Fryling
Karl Huth

SUPPORTER \$250 - \$499

Anonymous
Benevity
Brianna Brickman & Richard Blake
Drs. Adrienne & Lazarus Camesas
Dana Contino

FRIEND \$100 - \$249

Anonymous	Assunta Galeno
Benevity	Alice Marques
Brandon Brack	Melody Mercieca
Johanna Costanzo	Susan Martin
Ann Curran	Jane Park
Max Denler	The Plotkin Family

FAN Up to \$100

Steven Altinel	Jen Maksel
David Barnitt	Patrice McDonald
Terry Bendel	Tiffany Morales
Elizabeth Brewer	Kerri Mulder
Angela Castro	Terri Muuss
Tara Chianese	Amy Nardone
Vanessa D'Aconti	Louise O'Hanlon
Susie Deinzer	Debbie Olsen
Nancy Deutsch	Elizabeth Owens
Anne Finger	Annie Pasqua
Mary Beth Finger	Daniel Popkave
Beth Fiorello	Teddie Potter
Andrea Galeno	Lisa Power
Malcolm Gilbert	Dee Reese
Adam Glazer	Stacy Roth
Sydney Hankins-Wright	Amy Russo
Erik Harris	Patti Russo
Anna Ievoli	Robert Russo
Jennifer Ievoli	Jim Sluder
Jane Irvine	Katie Smiley
David Lazer	Jane Stepper DeStio
Melanie Lipton	

**Join our list of donors simply by
opening your phone's camera and
following the link from this code:**



Considering Matthew Shepard

Text authors and publication credits.

All music composed by Craig Hella Johnson © 2016.

1. **Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass** Compilation with additional text © Craig Hella Johnson / Please Come to Wyoming by John D. Nesbitt © by John D. Nesbitt. Used by kind permission. / Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass by Sue Wallis © by Estate of Sue Wallis. Used by kind permission. Quoting *Prelude in C Major Book 1, Well-Tempered Clavier* by J. S. Bach
2. **Ordinary Boy** © Craig Hella Johnson / From *The Meaning of Matthew*, by Judy Shepard p. 206. / + I Love Poem by Matt Shepard © by Judy Shepard. Used by kind permission.
3. **We Tell Each Other Stories** We Tell Each Other Stories © Craig Hella Johnson
5. **The Fence (before)*** Lesléa Newman
7. **The Fence (that night)** Material reproduced from Hildegard of Bingen from *Symphonia: A Critical Edition of the "Symphonia Armonie Celestium Revelationum" (Symphony of the Harmony of Celestial Revelations), Second Edition*, translated by Barbara Newman. © 1988, 1998 by Cornell University. Used by permission of the translator, Barbara Newman, and publisher, Cornell University Press. / The Fence (that night)* Lesléa Newman
8. **A Protestor** * Lesléa Newman / Additional italicized text by Craig Hella Johnson
10. **Keep it Away From Me (The Wound of Love)** by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson. Used by kind permission. / Gabriela Mistral
12. **Fire of the Ancient Heart** by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson. Used by kind permission. / ^Genesis 4:10 / #Rumi / ~William Blake. With thanks to Tom Burritt – percussion consultation and special arrangement
14. **Stray Birds** Stray Birds by Rabindranath Tagore
15. **We Are All Sons (part 1)** by Michael Dennis Browne © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne. Used by kind permission.
16. **I Am Like You/We Are All Sons (part 2)** © Craig Hella Johnson
17. **The Innocence** by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson. Used by kind permission.
19. **The Fence (one week later)*** Lesléa Newman
21. **Stars*** Lesléa Newman / Dennis Shepard Statement to the Court
22. **In Need of Breath** Hafiz lyrics from "In Need of the Breath" from the Penguin (New York) publication *The Gift: Poems by Hafiz* by Daniel Ladinsky. Copyright © 1999 Daniel Ladinsky and used with his permission.
23. **Deer Song** by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson. Used by kind permission.
24. **The Fence (after)/The Wind*** Lesléa Newman
25. **Pilgrimage*** Lesléa Newman
26. **Meet Me Here** © Craig Hella Johnson
27. **Thank You** "Thanks" from THE RAIN IN THE TREES by W. S. Merwin. Copyright © 1988 by W. S. Merwin, used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc. Used by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. All rights reserved.

28. All of Us by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson © 2015 by Michael Dennis Browne and Craig Hella Johnson. Used by kind permission. /+ from *Divine Comedy*, from the *Paradiso* by Dante, *adapted by Michael Dennis Browne*

29. Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass (reprise) Cattle, Horses, Sky and Grass by Sue Wallis © by Estate of Sue Wallis. Used by kind permission. / Please Come to Wyoming by John D. Nesbitt © by John D. Nesbitt. Used by kind permission.

Recitations I-X compiled from news reports and crafted by Craig Hella Johnson and Michael Dennis Browne.

*All works authored by Lesléa Newman are from *OCTOBER MOURNING: A SONG FOR MATTHEW SHEPARD*. Copyright © 2012 by Lesléa Newman. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA. Selections used by permission of Curtis Brown, Ltd. Copyright © 2012. All Rights Reserved.

“Introduction” from OCTOBER MOURNING: A SONG FOR MATTHEW SHEPARD by Lesléa Newman

On Tuesday, October 6, 1998, at approximately 11:45 p.m., twenty-one-year-old Matthew Shepard, a gay college student attending the University of Wyoming, was kidnapped from a bar by twenty-one-year old Aaron McKinney and twenty-one-year-old Russell Henderson. Pretending to be gay, the two men lured Matthew Shepard into their truck, drove him to the outskirts of Laramie, robbed him, beat him with a pistol, tied him to a buck-rail fence, and left him to die. The next day, at about 6:00 p.m. – eighteen hours after the attack – he was discovered and taken to a hospital. He never regained consciousness and died five days later, on Monday, October 12, with his family by his side.

One of the last things Matthew Shepard did that Tuesday night was attend a meeting of the University of Wyoming's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered Association. The group was putting final touches on plans for Gay Awareness Week, scheduled to begin the following Sunday, October 11, coinciding with a National Coming Out Day. Planned campus activities included a film showing, an open poetry reading, and a keynote speaker.

That keynote speaker was me.

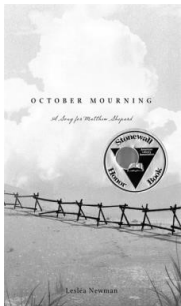
I never forgot what happened in Laramie, and around the tenth anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death, I found myself thinking more and more about him. And so I began writing a series of poems, striving to create a work of art that explores the events surrounding Matthew Shepard's murder in order to gain a better understanding of their impact on myself and the world.

What really happened at the fence that night? Only three people know the answer to that question. Two of them are imprisoned, convicted murderers whose stories often contradict each other (for example, in separate interviews both McKinney and Henderson have claimed that he alone tied Matthew Shepard to the fence). The other person who knows what really happened that night is dead. We will never know his side of the story.

This book is my side of the story.

While the poems in this book are inspired by actual events, they do not in any way represent the statements, thoughts, feelings, opinions, or attitudes of any actual person. The statements, thoughts, feelings, opinions, and attitudes conveyed belong to me. All monologues contained within the poems are figments of my imagination; no actual person spoke any of the words contained within the body of any poem. Those words are mine and mine alone. When the words of an actual person are used as a short epigraph for a poem, the source of that quote is cited at the back of the book in a section entitled "Notes," which contains citations and suggestions for further reading about the crime. The poems, which are meant to be read in sequential order as one whole work, are a work of poetic invention and imagination: a historical novel in verse. The poems are not an objective reporting of Matthew Shepard's murder and its aftermath; rather they are my own personal interpretation of them.

There is a bench on the campus of the University of Wyoming dedicated to Matthew Shepard, inscribed with the words *He continues to make a difference*. My hope is that readers of *October Mourning: A Song for Matthew Shepard* will be inspired to make a difference and honor his legacy by erasing hate and replacing it with compassion, understanding, and love.



Candlewick.com

OCTOBER MOURNING: A SONG FOR MATTHEW SHEPARD. Copyright © 2012 by Lesléa Newman. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

Considering Matthew Shepard was developed with the support of Conspirare. Please visit conspirare.org to learn more about this project and learn more about the many individuals and organizations who support this work.

Conspirare, The Matthew Shepard Foundation, and KLRU-TV, Austin PBS are partnering to ensure that *Considering Matthew Shepard* reaches as many people as possible on the stage and screen. The Matthew Shepard Foundation has provided ongoing support in outreach and project development. Conspirare and KLRU-TV, Austin PBS are co-producing a *Considering Matthew Shepard* television special commemorating the 20th anniversary of Matthew Shepard's passing. KLRU profiled Craig Hella Johnson's creative process in their documentary series *Arts in Context* (available at artsincontext.org). The film will be accompanied by outreach and engagement programs.

LIFE

Saturday, June 15, 2024 at 7:30pm
Our Lady of Grace Church
West Babylon

BABYLON
CHORALE

Come groove to hit songs from the 70's

For more information, visit
www.babylonchorale.org



Advertising your business or organization in an eVoco program is an effective way to get your message out to a highly responsive audience. And it makes smart business sense.



{ your ad
HERE }

Our concert audiences are your target audience. And you get the satisfaction of supporting your local arts community in the process.



add your voice to ours!
Contact advertising @ [eVoco.vc](mailto:evoco.vc) or visit www.evoco.vc/advertising

Congratulations to the cast and crew of Considering Matthew Shepherd!

JIMMY MOORE
Voice Teacher, Moore Music
Text or Call 516-330-3030

Audition Prep
for Shows,
College, and
Camp

NYSSMA Prep:
All levels &
languages + sight
reading



30+ Years
Experience

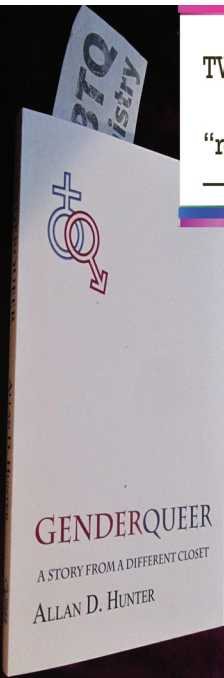
Beautiful
Music Studio
Located in
Sea Cliff

**Anyone Can Learn to Sing:
Positive Holistic Approach
The Jimmy Moore Method**

TWO RELEASES from Long Island author Allan D. Hunter

“relatable and also completely uncommon”

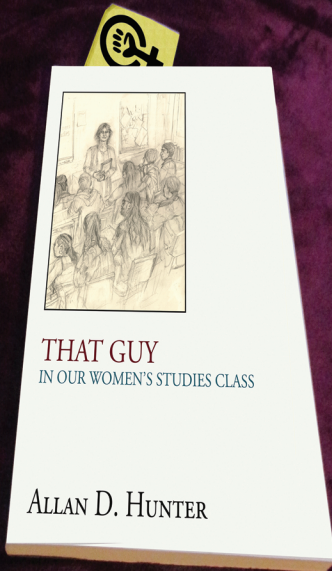
— Brian Alessandro, *Newsday*



A genderqueer coming-of-age and coming-out story from an era long before ‘genderqueer’ was trending.



Step 1: COMING OUT



A genderqueer *sissy* male realizes that women's studies in college is the ideal place to discuss gender.



titles available now @ amazon, ingram and your local independent bookseller

Step 2: GOING FORTH