

## Bios

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American Mezzo-soprano **Hai-Ting Chinn** performs in a wide range of styles and venues, from Purcell to Pierrot Lunaire, Cherubino to *The King & I*, J.S. Bach to P.D.Q. Bach. She was featured in the revival and tour of Phillip Glass's *Einstein on the Beach*, performed at venues around the world from 2011–2014, and she is currently singing the role of Belle in *Glass's La Belle et la Bête*, also on tour. She has performed with the New York City Opera, The Wooster Group, OperaOmnia, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Israel Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and the Waverly Consort; and on the stages of Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center in Philadelphia, the Edinburgh Festival, the Verbier Festival, and London's West End. She has premiered new works by Amy Beth Kirsten, Du Yun, Conrad Cummings, Stefan Weisman, Yoav Gal, and Matt Schickele. Hai-Ting is also an Artist-in-Residence at HERE arts center, where she is developing *Science Fair*, a staged solo show of science set to music.



The *Washington Post* refers to **Kenneth Meyer** as, “A thinking man’s guitarist – he focuses on the inner structure of a piece...and plays with impressive gravity and power.” The *Buffalo News* has called him, “Impeccably articulate with superb technique.”

Since winning the national first prize at the MTNA Collegiate Artist Competition, Meyer continues to appear in recital, as a chamber musician, and soloist with orchestra in venues throughout North America, South America and Europe. His commitment to cultivate, perform and record the music of his generation’s leading composers has garnered awards from the Barlow Endowment, Argosy Foundation and the Hanson Institute for American Music.

Recent appearances include performances in Weill Recital Hall, Zankel Hall and Yankee Stadium; solo recitals in Romania and Hungary and concerto appearances with the Long Island Philharmonic, Symphoria and Ensemble X. *Draw The Strings Tight*, a recording featuring compositions commissioned by and written for Mr. Meyer will be released on INNOVA records later this year.

Currently, Meyer directs a thriving guitar studies program at Onondaga Community College and also serves on the faculty of Syracuse University’s Setnor School of Music. He continues to be a featured lecturer, performer, adjudicator and teacher at festivals, colleges and universities throughout this country and abroad. He holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music and currently resides in Geneva, NY with his wife and two young sons.

## Bios *(continued)*

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“A talent the ear wants to follow wherever it goes” (*Boston Globe*), **Gregory Mertl** has garnered commissions from the Tanglewood Music Center (1999), the Rhode Island Philharmonic (2000), the Tarab Cello Ensemble (2001), the Phoenix Symphony (2001), the Wind Ensembles of the Big Ten Universities (2002), the Ostrava Oboe Festival, Czech Republic (2005, 2009), Kenneth Meyer and the Hanson Institute (2006), the University of Oregon (2013), CSTMA (2013), counter)induction (2015) and the Barlow Endowment for a piano concerto for pianist Solungga Liu and the University of Minnesota Wind Ensemble, Craig Kirchhoff, conductor, which was premiered in November, 2011 and will be released in 2016.

Born in 1969, Mertl has degrees from Yale University (BA 1991) and the Eastman School of Music (Ph.D. in Music Composition 2005). He has been fulltime Visiting Artist of Composition at the Setnor School of Music at Syracuse University (2008-2010) and has been composer-in-residence at many residencies, including Yaddo and the Helen Wurlitzer Foundation in Taos, New Mexico. In 1998, he was a Tanglewood Composition Fellow and had the tremendous privilege of studying with Henri Dutilleux and Mauricio Kagel.

His most recent works are two song cycles for mezzo and guitar and for mezzo, oboe, guitar and percussion, a piece for flute and piano commissioned by the University of Oregon for Molly Barth and David Riley, and a clarinet trio for counter)induction. He is presently composing a concerto for the French cellist Xavier Phillips.

High Resolution photos available for download at:  
<http://www.gregorymertl.com/pressmaterials.html>

Audio Samples available at:  
<http://www.gregorymertl.com/listen.html>

## Program

Time Stands Still  
Go Crystal Tears  
Come, Heavy Sleep  
Now, o now, I needs must part  
duration: 15 minutes

John Dowland  
(1563-1626)

*A Seeker's Song* (2006)  
duration: 9 minutes

Gregory Mertl  
(b. 1969)

Awake Sweet Love  
Weep you no more sad fountains  
Come Again  
duration: 10 minutes

John Dowland

## Intermission

*Gathering What Is To Be Told* (2013)  
duration: 35 minutes

Gregory Mertl

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|---|---------------------|
| 1. When I have fears that I may cease         | John Keats          |
| 2. Is it thy will?                            | William Shakespeare |
| 3. Gourmets of Tragedies                      | Charles Simic       |
| 4. How oft when thou, my music, music play'st | William Shakespeare |
| 5. We have walked so many times               | Wendell Berry       |
| 6. Let all the strains of joy                 | Rabindranath Tagore |

Hai-Ting Chinn, mezzo-soprano  
Kenneth Meyer, guitar  
Gregory Mertl, composer

## Program Notes by Gregory Mertl

### *Two sets of songs by John Dowland*

John Dowland (1563-1626) was one of the greatest composers and lutenists of the English Renaissance. Published in 1597, his *First Booke of Songes or Ayres of Foure Parties with Tableture for the Lute* was the first ever publication of English lute songs, setting into motion a new form that would garner him public acclaim and continue to occupy his compositional output for much of his life. Other sets appeared in 1600, 1603 and 1612. While they also exist in several vocal parts, these songs emphasize the primacy of the top voice with harmonic accompaniment, something which seems so natural to us today, but which was a relatively new at the time. Like sacred music composed throughout Europe, most secular songs tended to be in a contrapuntal, choral style. Dowland's songs feature the solo voice, dance rhythms and the "melancholic" mood fashionable in the late Renaissance. The songs often speak of unrequited love. They served as a model for many composers of the time and can be seen as roots of the contemporary song cycle on the program. In fact, the fourth song of the *Gathering* set harkens back specifically to Dowland's style. Most musicologists believe Dowland was also the lyricist of his songs.

### *A Seeker's Song (2006)*

In virtually all of my pieces, it is the sound and personality of an instrument (or combination of instruments) that inspires a piece. As I gradually acquainted myself with it, the guitar revealed its searing, vulnerable beauty - a quality which totally enchanted me. It is the guitar's inability to sustain, its particular six-string resonance, the method of plucking, and the special sound of turns or ornaments - due to the technique of hammer-ons and pull-offs, that I believe yields this beauty. Turns, in particular, enthralled me. (There is simply nothing like that sound on any other instrument.) They are central to the musical fabric of the piece, as both rhythmic and figurative elements.

Although we are used to the guitar in highly amplified settings, in its untainted state the guitar seems to me to embody intimacy, both in its delicacy and in its quiet power. And it is intimacy, mainly, that I explore in this piece - an exploration which unconsciously and naturally gave rise to an air of seeking. Seeking is universal to humans, but how and why we seek is uniquely particular to each individual. It is a personal process, intimate in the extreme. "Song" in the title speaks to an overarching lyricism, a particular quality in the music, which is punctuated by impassioned cries and invocations that seem to spill out beyond its confines.

I am profoundly indebted to Kenneth Meyer for his confidence in my creativity and his courage in commissioning new works for guitar. I hope I have done justice to this trust and am grateful to have come to know this remarkable instrument.

### *Gathering What Is To Be Told (2013)*

Beginning with the troubadours, the combination of voice and guitar/lute has had a long history. Regrettably, while it has become the quintessential vehicle for songwriters, it has virtually escaped the attention of contemporary composers today.

Wishing to reclaim this pairing, my intention was to showcase its expressive and textural vitality. This set of songs also gave me the distinct pleasure of coupling the talents of Hai-Ting Chinn and Kenneth Meyer, for whom, together, I have been fortunate to compose.

There are a variety of themes explored in this collection, from the existential, to love between individuals, to the horrors of humanity, and to man's relation to nature. In some sense, the cycle builds to the penultimate song – with the last one serving as a kind of philosophical coda.