

# The Ph.D./D.M.A. Programs in Music

May 16, 2023 6:00 p.m.

*Baisley Powell Elebash Recital Hall*



Amber Evans, voice  
with Neil Beckmann, theorbo; Austin Philemon, piano;  
Abigail Hong, violin; and Tyler Neidermayer, clarinets,  
electronics and sound

*“Love, Death, Friends and Government”*

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|--|-------------------------------------|
| <i>O Virtu Sapientiae</i> for solo voice and shruti box*<br>*arranged by Amber Evans; world premiere           | Hildegard von Bingen<br>(1089–1179) |
| <i>L’eraclito Amoroso</i> for voice and theorbo (1651)   | Barbara Strozzi<br>(1619–77)        |
| <i>Mama, I don’t see you in my face</i> for solo voice* (2022-3)<br>*world premiere                            | Oded Zehavi<br>(b. 1961)            |
| <i>Love’s Coming</i> for soprano and piano* (2013)<br>*U.S. premiere   | Gordon Hamilton<br>(b. 1982)        |
| Bianca’s aria “Over the Sea” from <i>The Exterminating Angel</i><br>for voice, piano and ondes martenot (2016) | Thomas Adès<br>(b. 1971)            |
| <i>...at least so far</i> for voice and hand percussion* (arr. 2023)<br>*U.S. premiere                         | Jakob Bragg<br>(b. 1990)            |

## INTERMISSION

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the D.M.A. degree.  
Please switch off your cell phones and refrain from taking flash pictures.

*fac ut ardeat* | for voice and electronics (2018, rev. 2023)

Lisa Atkinson  
(b. 1992)

*Songs of Love, Death, Friends and Government* for soprano,  
clarinet/bass clarinet and violin (2004)

David T. Little  
(b. 1978)

*He Died Before He Knew Me*

*Scott Speaks Seven*

*They Never Talked*

*Fingers Drip Fact*

*Mr. Duane, Where Have You Gone?*

*After A Film by Ellie Lee*

*Two Marines*

*A Word on My Ear* (1951)

Michael Flanders and Donald Swann  
(1922–75) (1923–94)

## Notes on the Program

*The overarching theme of today's recital is inspired by a fateful pandemic-era evening, meeting New Jersey born composer David T. Little at a party in Brisbane, Australia, hosted by local composer, Robert Davidson. With the imminent knowledge that I would be moving back to New York to begin my doctoral studies at the CUNY Graduate Center, we chatted about his catalogue of vocal works, and I was delighted when the score of his cycle, Songs of Love, Death, Friends and Government, arrived care of Boosey and Hawkes in my mailbox. The title alone instigated a lightbulb moment of my personal association with themes commonly found in vocal works throughout the entire Western canon. Each of these four themes are represented individually and often collectively in every work programmed for this recital. From the spiritual weavings of Hildegard von Bingen to an excerpt for a monodrama being written by Oded Zehavi at the same time as this note is typed, a substantial gamut of emotional gravitas awaits.*

\*denotes US premiere

\*\*denotes world premiere

**Hildegard von Bingen** (1089-1179), arr. Evans - *O Virtus Sapientiae* for solo voice and shruti box\*\*

Hildegard von Bingen was one of the most remarkable figures of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, not just in the field of music, but also in poetry, religion, and languages. She was incredibly prolific, and wrote a few hundred chants, most of which are settings of her own poetry. Many of these chants are very

matriarchal, often portraying women in rich and varied lights, as well as the joys of nature. Very few chants are attributed to God, or Jesus Christ, and instead focus more on Mary, the vitality of nature, and spiritual slants on visions of life on earth and beyond. One of her most famous works, the *Ordo virtutum*, is the only musical drama written during medieval times that has survived and is able to be performed today. Interestingly, the virtues are all sung by women, and the role of the Devil is presented by a man, with no singing, only the kinds of noises Hildegard imagined the Devil might make. Hildegard was a theologian who wrote music, and who designed artworks to accompany at least one of her treatises, she provides opportunities to contextualise her works to a greater degree than any other composer before her.

The antiphon above is a lighter image, full of wonder not terrifying, but elevating and edifying. It recalls the six-winged Seraph in Isaiah, together with the omnipresent Wisdom as the agent of creation in Ecclesiasticus, as well as the two great wings of Caritas in the opening vision of the *Liber Divinorum Operum*, representing love of God and love of neighbour.

**Barbara Strozzi** (1619-1677) - *L'eraclito Amorososo (Heraclitus in Love)* (1651), with Neil Beckmann, theorbo

Venetian composer Barbara Strozzi was undeniably one of the most influential figures for Baroque arias and vocal cantatas. The illegitimate daughter of poet Giulio Strozzi and Isabella Garzoni, Giulio's maid, her father ensured that she would be trained in composition. Francesco Cavalli became her teacher, but little else is known about her childhood or general musical upbringing. Due to her father's respected presence within artistic circles, Strozzi enjoyed more opportunities than other women artists, certainly more than most women composers of the time. Said to be talented singer, also accompanying herself in performances, she was known to have sung at her father's home and was heard by prominent musicians, this furthering her ability to compose high level music that would also be published during her lifetime. Her work was published prolifically throughout her lifetime, notably without a male pseudonym, which was almost customary at the time. Her works with text largely focus on the subject of love, whether it be consummated, unrequited, denied or obliterated. While the relationship between the chaconne continuo and the liquid vocal line is palpable and intimately intertwined, word painting reigns supreme, gifting the vocalist with writing that pre-empt the *prima donna* trope to come in the forging of the vocal cantata and operatic genres. Suspension and dissonance, tension and release reign supreme to intimate the singer's betrayal, and her ultimate renouncement of faith in the possibility of love's constancy.

**Oded Zehavi** (b. 1961) – *Mama, I don't see you in my face\*\**

Excerpted from a monodrama in progress written for Amber Evans

This movement is an excerpt from a larger work for soprano and live or recorded percussion and electronics, the idea of which was inspired by the meeting and melding of two artistic minds at Avaloch Music Institute last summer. Oded Zehavi is one of Tel Aviv's most highly regarded living composers, and in conjunction with the insightful and touching words of librettist Natsumi Meyer, an idea for a universally felt story is born. The piece depicts a young girl's struggle with cultural identity, and where it places her in the context of the world around her. The disassociation of racial ambiguity is lauded by her mother, who praises her daughter's face for its differing facial structure to that of her own. The protagonist cannot help but associate herself with the caricatures of Japanese people that the United States cartoonists sketched, and vice versa when she sees herself in the mirror.

**Gordon Hamilton** (b. 1982) – *Love's Coming* (2013), with Austin Philemon, piano  
Written for Amber Evans

Hamilton is an Australian composer and conductor who was the Artistic Director of The Australian Voices from 2009-2020 after working in Bremen, Germany as the director of Northern Spirit. This work was written for Amber during her time in The Australian Voices, as the ensemble's composer in residence from 2010-11, soprano (intermittently) from 2010-2020, and the ensemble's interim Artistic Director prior to John Rotar's new appointment in the role in 2022. Hamilton's love for John Shaw Neilson's poetry is displayed beautifully in this work, which explores the tender and exciting facets of love. The fluctuating tempi and the relationship between voice and piano are both seamless, giving the piece a flowing, endless quality, and a staple for the modern art song canon.

**Thomas Adès** (b. 1971) – Blanca's aria "Over the Sea" from *The Exterminating Angel* for voice (and ondes martenot), with Austin Philemon, piano

Thomas Adès is a British composer, whose works branch from small chamber ensembles, orchestral repertoire, and particularly operatic repertoire is where he first really became widely known for his compositions. In his early works, one of which I've had the pleasure to sing – his setting of Tennessee Williams' *Life Story*, it's interesting to note that he was widely experimental with his notation and choice of instrumental combinations. There is a marking in the score that shows *cresc.* and *dim.* that are drawn with wiggly lines to indicate the intensification of vocal vibrato as well as the actual dynamic level. It was this curiosity that led him to be successful in *The Tempest* and in most recent memory, his opera *The Exterminating Angel*, which garnered much interest at The Met for the "Angel"'s Ab6 moment and generally ridiculously high tessitura. Based on Luis Buñuel's 1962 surrealist film *El ángel exterminador*, the story revolves around a group of aristocrats gathering for a dinner party from which all but one of the servants has mysteriously disappeared. They soon to find themselves trapped in the host's mansion, not by some physical obstacle but by an inexplicable psychological force. The guests settle down for dinner, progress unhurriedly through it, and advance to the drawing room, where Blanca proceeds to play the piano. While Buñuel's film has Blanca playing Pietro Domenico Paradisi's Sixth Piano Sonata, the opera humorously has Blanca playing Adès' very own *Blanca Variations*. In this vocal reduction rendition without the massive orchestral forces featured in this opera, keeping the solo feature of the *ondes martenot* carries a semblance of the surreal, haunting quality felt in the original score.

**Jakob Bragg** (b. 1990) - *...at least so far* (arr. 2023)  
Commissioned by Amber Evans and panSonus

Jakob Bragg's *...at least so far* is the culmination of a continuing composer-performer relationship forged during Amber and Jakob's respective undergraduate degrees at the Queensland Conservatorium, Brisbane, Australia. This work marks Bragg's initial inspiration for the continuation of neo new complexity writings established by the traditions of Maxwell Davies, Birtwhistle, Fernyhough and others. *...at least so far* explores the use and breakdown of language by politicians. Through the use and misuse of words, from the deceptive, the sensationalised, to the downright absurd, their very meaning is assaulted and harnessed to forward an agenda. Direct quotes are used from Donald Trump, Theresa May, Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, Tony Abbott, Scott Morrison, Peter Dutton, various government channels of the People's Republic of China and Australian Government, the testimony of Mihrigul Tursun, and the United Nations Human Rights Council. Originally performed by panSonus as a duo for voice and percussion, this performance marks the premiere of the arrangement for solo vocalist and handheld percussion.

**Lisa Atkinson** (b. 1992) – *fac ut ardeat* | (2018, rev. 2023)

Commissioned by the Cortona New Music Collective

*fac ut ardeat*, was written for Amber Evans and commissioned by Amber and the Cortona Collective. The title *fac ut ardeat*, comes not from the *Stabat Mater* but instead comes from a description of an inscribed fireplace in Rachel Kushner’s book, *The Flamethrowers*, and roughly translates to, “made to burn.” This idea of violent disposability is integral to the work; as each line of text is sung, each gesture is consumed by the delay and disintegrates to make room for the following events, leaving behind smoldering remains.

I would like to quickly thank Amber for asking me to be a part of this commission and for being such a generous collaborator and thank the Cortona Collective for helping to initiate this project and friendship.

- Lisa Atkinson

**David T. Little** (b. 1978) - *Songs of Love, Death, Friends, and Government* (2004)

Commissioned by and written for Amanda Jellen

- I. He Died Before He Knew Me
- II. Scott Speaks Seven
- III. They Never Talked
- IV. Fingers Drip Fact
- V. Mr. Duane, Where Have You Gone?
- VI. After A Film by Ellie Lee
- VII. Two Marines

In the composition process for his opera *Dog Days*, **David T. Little** felt that it was really the first time that he thought about writing opera or what that could mean for him as a composer. Before this time, he states that “...it was not a form that I could ever really, before that point, connect to... I eventually encountered *Wozzeck* and *Peter Grimes*. Those are the two pieces that really got me hooked.” In 2004, between completing his Master’s degree and beginning his doctorate, he composed the first songs that would eventually go into *Dog Days*. As a private student of Osvaldo Golijov in Boston, Little wrote the song cycle *Songs of Love, Death, Friends, and Government*. During a lesson, Golijov suggested that the songs felt like studies for operas. “It has been said that a society can be judged by the way it treats its animals,” Little says in the program notes for *Dog Days*. He continues, “It also stands to reason that you can tell a lot about a person by how long they can remain truly human during the most traumatic of times.” At this point in his life, Little decided to pursue composing vocal music more seriously. After beginning his doctoral studies in composition at Princeton University, he submitted this work to the Harvey Gaul Competition of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble. Little won the competition in 2004. Throughout the cycle, we hear snippets of lives connected with Little. *He Died Before He Knew Me* brings forth a matter-of-fact account of the life of someone who never had the chance to get to know the protagonist (in this case, Little’s grandfather James Flynn). It begs the question of what is most important about the legacy one leaves behind within the cut and dry attributes of a life’s summary detailing all that is left of a person when they pass away. *Scott Speaks Seven* depicts the typical red-blooded American, bleeding in Red, Gold and Black. *They Never Talked* describes the numbness of a couple after experiencing possible life-threatening events, knowing that a Pandora’s Box of sorts could very well be opened. The “G”, “W” and “A” all refer to the “beats” - Gregory Corso, William S. Burroughs and Allen Ginsburg. *Fingers Drip Fact* describes the perspective of someone living with a mentally unstable partner with likely suicidal ideation and manic-depressive

episodes. The illogical fear is painted of coming home to find their loved one lifeless in their bathtub. After a brief and savage disconnected phone line, we are presented with *After a Film by Ellie Lee*, describes the story that inspired Little's *Dog Days*, a rose-tinted funnelling of information to the masses. It is the story of an America not far removed from our own, but engaged in a horrible war with an unknown enemy. Communications with the outside world have been completely cut off and the people, subjected to food and water rationing, are only told what the government wants them to know. The final work, *Two Marines*, later excerpted for Little's cycle *Soldier Songs* is a stark depiction of the grief felt by a mother who has already heard the practiced, emotionally devoid speech from "The President" stating that her son has fallen in battle, and her last-straw reaction to this news and the delivery of it.

(Interview excerpted with David T. Little from 2016).

### **Michael Flanders (1922-75) and Donald Swann (1923-1994) – *A Word on My Ear* (1951)**

After the heavy subject matter of the entirety of the program just gone past, this final number is a total indulgence on my part. Michael Flanders and Donald Swann have had a profound and lasting impact not only on British comedy and music, but also on just about every other major point and place in the panorama of British entertainment over a span of about sixty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A mostly harmless play on the "dumb singer" trope, Flanders and Swann's genius wit and saccharine set up bring forth the *prima donna* figure to the stage today. Instead of the lauded reception this might have originally had, I trust that it will bring all of us crashing back down to earth, so much so that Pavlov himself is applauding from the grave.

## **About the Artists**

**Amber Evans** is an Australian vocalist, conductor and composer currently based in the US. She regularly performs as an early music soloist, chamber ensemble vocalist, and contemporary opera/vocal specialist, with consistent touring engagements in Australia, the US and the UK. Winner of the inaugural US Dwight and Ursula Mamlok Advancement Award for the interpretation of contemporary music, she is committed to the vital artistic collaboration with composers to thoughtfully contribute to the musical canon of the present day. An exponent of the capabilities of the "extra-normal" voice, Amber has premiered over seventy specialised solo vocal chamber works, engaging audiences with ever-changing insights into the paramount role of the voice in the evolution of art-making. She is also a featured soloist and chorusmaster on the CD of Poul Ruders' new opera *The Thirteenth Child* under the Bridge Records label, which was released in conjunction with the Santa Fe Opera premiere in the summer of 2019. In 2022 for Opera Queensland (OQ), Amber joined their Young Artist Program. Most recently, she sang as a featured soloist in the QPAC Concert Hall season of OQ's *The Sopranos* with Queensland Symphony Orchestra, and toured regionally throughout Queensland with the production in May. During her time back in Brisbane, Amber became the inaugural lecturer for aural studies at the Young Conservatorium, stepped in as assistant conductor for The Australian Voices, established the vocal sextet Formant, and directed the music for All Saints Anglican Church.

Upon her return to the US, Amber has begun her doctoral studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She has returned to many of her musical endeavours prior to the pandemic, including work with medieval ensemble Concordian Dawn, concerts and services with the Choir of St. Luke in the Fields, and a permanent extra member of the Ekmeles new music vocal sextet. [www.amberevansmusic.com](http://www.amberevansmusic.com)

**Austin Philemon** is an organist, conductor, and composer based in New York City. He has had the opportunity to perform solo recitals domestically including at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Paul's Chapel at Trinity Wall Street, and the Church of St. Mary the Virgin in Times Square, as well as abroad in Paris, France; Graz, Austria; Romainmôtier, Switzerland; Haarlem, Netherlands; Modena, Italy, and Höganäs, Sweden. He was selected as a finalist in several major improvisation competitions including the National Competition in Organ Improvisation and the University of Michigan Organ Improvisation Competition, and also received first prize in the George R. Mathison Memorial Competition. Austin currently serves as Director of Music & Media at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, and was recently appointed Assistant Conductor of the Brooklyn Chamber Orchestra. He also studies bandoneon in the studio of Omar Caccia.

**Neil Beckmann** is a Brooklyn-based guitarist, teacher, instrument builder, and arts worker interested in creating an expansive life in music for himself and others. Encompassing performing, teaching, commissioning new works, exploring the diverse plucked string instrument family, and making his own instruments, he hopes to engender a spirit of curiosity for how music can be made, explored, and performed through many different lenses.

He has performed at Lincoln Center, Merkin Concert Hall, El Museo del Barrio, the University of Pennsylvania, and MASS MoCA in solo, chamber, improvisational, and orchestral settings. In 2020, he collaborated with Heartbeat Opera on a digital reimaging of Verdi's Macbeth entitled Lady M, where he played classical and electric guitars, lute, and mandolin. Originally from Cincinnati, Ohio, Neil lives and works in New York City as a freelancer traveling around the city to teach and perform and is the co-label manager at New Focus Recordings. Formative teachers include David Starobin, David Leisner, Clare Callahan, Rodney Stuckey, Daniel Swenberg, and oodles of books and YouTube videos to learn how to make instruments in his apartment.

Born in Cherry Hill, NJ, violinist **Abigail Hong** is in her first year of doctoral studies at the CUNY Grad Center with Mark Steinberg. She graduated with her Master's degree at The Juilliard School and was awarded a Benzaquen Career Grant and graduated as the Presser Foundation Scholar of her undergraduate class at The New England Conservatory. A passionate chamber musician, Abigail won top prizes at the Fischhoff and Plowman Chamber Music Competitions. Abigail taught at City College Academy of the Arts in the Bronx, Harvard University's Quad Chamber Music Program, and the Music Advancement Program at Juilliard for the past three years. Abigail's recent performances include world premieres by Thomas Ades and Rebecca Saunders as Concertmaster of the Verbier, Lucerne, and Spoleto Festival Orchestras. Most of Abigail's summer season is spent in Europe where she has performed in the Berlin Philharmonie, Musikverein, Concertgebouw, Festspielhaus Baden-Baden, KKL Luzern, Rudolfinum, Kölner Philharmonie, and many others. Abigail has performed at festivals including Norfolk, Yellow Barn, Taos, Music@Menlo, and Pablo Casals, and will perform this season with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Sarasota Opera Orchestra as Assistant Concertmaster, Gstaad Festival Orchestra, Verbier Festival Orchestra, and Baltimore Symphony. Her teachers include Amy J. Lee and Soovin Kim, and most recent studies are with Catherine Cho. Abigail plays a 1996 Mario Miralles violin and Benoit Rolland bow.

**Tyler Neidermayer** is an NY-based electroacoustic composer/performer who is pushing the boundaries of the clarinet and bass clarinet to new extremes. Dedicated to consistently presenting new works for clarinets and live electronics, he frequently collaborates with emerging composers to explore the extremes of his instruments and realize new musical ideas. Tyler likes to explore live sound processing and manipulation within his compositions, allowing space to create and control in performance. Tyler is a member of Apply Triangle, an NYC-based electroacoustic trio. He also runs sound and records shows for multiple ensemble and solo artists in NYC, as well as editing audio for various podcasts. He recently released his self-produced EP *This Isn't You*. Tyler earned undergraduate degree from Northern Arizona University and his master's degree in Contemporary Clarinet Performance from the Manhattan School of Music's Contemporary Performance Program.

## Texts and Translations

### *O Virtus Sapientiae*

Hildegard von Bingen

O virtus Sapientiae,  
que circuiens circuisti,  
comprehendendo omnia  
in una via que habet vitam,  
tres alas habens,  
quarum una in altum volat  
et altera de terra sudat  
et tertia undique volat.  
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet, O Sapientia.

### *L'eraclito Amoruso*

Barbara Strozzi

Udite amanti la cagione, oh Dio,  
ch'a lagrimar mi porta:  
nell'adorato e bello idolo mio,  
che sì fido credei,  
la fede è morta.  
Vaghezza ho sol di piangere,  
mi pasco sol di lagrime,  
il duolo è mia delizia  
e son miei gioie i gemiti.  
Ogni martie aggradami,  
ogni dolor diletta mi,  
i singulti mi sanano,  
i sospir mi consolano.  
Ma se la fede negami  
quell'incostante e perfido,  
almen fede serbatemi  
sino alla morte, o lagrime!  
Ogni tristezza assalgami,  
ogni cordoglio eternisi,  
tanto ogni male affliggami  
che m'uccida e sotterrimi.

### Oh Wisdom's energy

O Wisdom's energy!  
Whirling, you encircle  
and everything embrace  
in the single way of life.  
Three wings you have:  
one soars above into the heights,  
one from the earth exudes,  
and all about now flies the third.  
Praise be to you, as is your due, O Wisdom.

### Heraclitus in Love

Translated by Richard Kolb

Listen you lovers, to the cause, oh God,  
of my weeping:  
in my handsome and adored idol,  
whom I believed to be faithful,  
faith is dead.  
I have pleasure only in weeping,  
I nourish myself only with tears.  
Grief is my delight  
and moans are my joys.  
Every anguish gives me pleasure,  
every pain delights me,  
sobs heal me,  
sighs console me.  
But if that inconstant traitor  
denies me constancy,  
at least let my devotion serve me  
until death, o tears.  
Every sadness soothes me,  
every sorrow sustains itself,  
every ill afflicts me so much  
that it slays and buries me.



### **Mama, I don't see you in my face**

Text by Natsumi Meyer (b. 2001)

Mama, where are you?  
I don't see you in my face  
I crawled next to Mama  
Who lay on the couch  
In the late afternoon light  
And pulled her limbs around mine.  
"Natchen, is that bone your nose?"  
"Yes."  
"How lucky I am to have a daughter  
With such a magnificent nose."  
I feel warm inside and I giggle.  
But I picture the caricatures of white people  
that the Japanese drew  
in their World War Two propaganda  
a face with a nose engulfing  
the rest of their features.  
This hurts less than the caricatures  
of Japanese people drawn by the United States.  
Overgrown teeth gnashing  
I see them in the mirror when I smile.

### **Love's Coming**

Text by John Shaw Neilson (1872-1942)

Quietly as rosebuds  
Talk to the thin air,  
Love came so lightly  
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as lovers  
Creep at the middle moon,  
Softly as players tremble  
In the tears of a tune;

Quietly as lilies  
Their faint vows declare, Came the shy pilgrim:  
I knew not he was there.

Quietly as tears fall  
On a wild sin,  
Softly as grief's call  
In a violin;

Without hail or tempest,  
Blue sword or flame,  
Love came so lightly  
I knew not that he came.

**“Over the Sea” from *The Exterminating Angel***

Libretto by Tom Cairns and Thomas Adès

Over the sea,  
Where is the way?  
Birds, tell me.  
Over the sea on islands of gold  
A mighty tall nation  
of giants stroll.  
A mighty tall nation  
upright and pure,  
Ruled by a king  
like none before.  
Gardens the king has over the sea  
where birds of paradise  
nest in the trees.

**Songs of Love, Death, Friends, and Government**

Text by David T. Little

I. He Died Before He Knew Me

*James Flynn in memoriam*

He died before he knew me,  
Died before I could really know him  
As a man  
Apart from as my Grandfather.

Quiet man,  
Peaceful man,  
He belched explosively,  
Yet whispered in speech.  
Sitting at the head of the table  
He would patiently wait for his turn to speak,  
then slowly shake his head  
when it would never come.

His loud, (oft drunk) children  
Bull-dozing his window  
Gone before he inhaled to initiate  
his first words:  
white painter paints a flannel shirt.

His delicate frailty came through  
so different than who he was before  
I was born.

A heavier man  
a drinker,  
Organist,  
Clarinetist,  
Father,

Insurance sales man.  
Monastery dropout,  
Kicked out-of-school kid  
Later-life-atheist of sorts,  
(with a Cath'lic funeral)  
Democrat,  
Eloper,  
Failed Air Force Pilot,  
(which saved his life)  
Caretaker of his broken son.

I often wonder  
Who he really was.  
Which one of these  
He was most.

## II. Scott Speaks Seven

Scott,  
speaks seven,  
reads runes,  
Wears chainmail shirt  
Asks you to  
Stab him  
with a knife  
when he wears it.

Bleeds in Red, Gold and Black  
And takes black with him  
to the grave  
and beyond.

## III. They Never Talked

They never talked about money,  
About how they survived like that for so long  
They never talked about money.  
In Tangiers  
and Paris  
and Cambridge of all places.  
How they hadn't eaten in weeks,  
when "G" sketched Bomb,  
or "W" dreamt Benway,  
or "A" sketched the first time-altering lines of  
"Howl."

## IV. Fingers Drip Fact

When I come home at night (my love)  
I fear,  
Expect to find you  
In the bath,  
Naked,

Glistening in the steamy room.  
Dead,  
In a pool of blood  
And soapy water.

A puddle of cooling life  
forms under you  
running from your jagged wound  
and slowly  
drips off your delicate white  
and lifeless  
fingers  
drip  
fact.

V. Mr. Duane, Where Have You Gone?

We're sorry,  
but the telephone number  
you have called  
has been  
disconnected.  
No further information  
is available.

VI. After A Film By Ellie Lee

In a field  
fleeing the scene:  
Air Force One  
As the animals start to die.  
(sky black and smoking),  
Yet,  
The News says nothing as the  
Sing-song weatherman  
Reports beautiful weather everywhere.  
Today  
Outside it rains  
Blood  
and Acid  
and Locusts  
Crackle  
under feet  
going nowhere.

VII. Two Marines

Two Marines  
Came to my house  
To tell me that  
My son  
A letter from the President  
"Regrettfully,"

My son  
I did not answer the door  
I knew the speech,  
Heard it before.  
“Bravely fought,  
In combat fell,  
For Liberty.”  
My son

I took my grief out to the yard  
And while they knocked,  
I doused their car  
Lit a match,  
Set it ablaze,  
My grief to see as burning flames.

Take this to The President,  
And tell him that his letters can't  
Not even signed by human hand,  
Not even written by a person  
This letter won't,  
Nor uniforms,  
Not folded flags,  
Nor victories won,  
Your practiced words,  
from scripts well-learned,  
Cannot bring back  
My son,  
Bring me back my son.

### **A Word on my Ear**

Text by Michael Flanders and Donald Swann

A prisoner to rapture by arduous duty pressed  
A slave to the longing which lingers in my breast  
Farewell, my friends, adieu  
I cannot stay with you  
Farewell, farewell, farewell.

Before I deliver my seventh encore  
There's something I'd like to make clear  
They say I've brought pleasure to millions or more  
They say that my singing half won the last war  
When I sang to the troops in the rear  
I'm a dame with a name  
At the peak of my fame  
I'm known as the Empress of Song  
The critics bravo  
And the critics should know  
But I cannot help feeling they're wrong  
I'm lauded, applauded, recorded, but list!  
I've a musical flaw that they seem to have missed

That they seem to have missed  
That they seem to have missed

I'm tone deaf  
Music means nothing to me  
It's only the way  
My accompanists play  
That makes it appear I'm in key  
Stone tone deaf  
Can't tell a key from a clef  
I stand by the pianist watching his face  
For he's told me to start when he comes to the place  
Where he'll give me a whacking great (\*discordant crash in the piano\*) in the bass  
Because I'm tone deaf

I'm tone deaf  
Never could understand pitch  
Some people I know  
Will sing sol-fa-ti-do  
And claim they can tell which is which  
Stone tone deaf  
Can't tell a B from an F  
Colin Davis once said, "Now I don't want to carp  
But if that's a B natural played on the harp  
Then you're either B-flat, dear, or bloody B-sharp!"  
But then I'm tone deaf

My technique is perfect and likewise my larynx  
Paolozzi nce sculpted a bust of my pharynx  
While lovers of music all praise with conviction  
My phrasing, my timbre, my perfection of diction  
Made trilling made Klemperer swoon!  
But I just can't remember the tune

I'm tone deaf  
But in most modern works for the voice  
The note that I hit  
Doesn't matter a bit  
So it's purely a personal choice  
Stone tone deaf  
Musically D-E-A-F  
Perhaps Covent Garden can do without me  
But while I live on an Equity fee  
I'll always get work from the dear BBC  
Because I'm tone deaf  
Yes I'm tone deaf!