




CELEBRATE WITH US.

Bosha's
Graduation Recital

BM'19, Composition

Sunday 3.31.2019 | 8pm | Burnes Hall
New England Conservatory of Music





Bosba's time at NEC

Thank you to my amazing, loving and crazy family - **papa, maman, Sibxy and Panhlauv**
Ken Schaphorst and **Michael Gandolfi**, my studio teachers, for teaching me the craft of composition,
Erica Washburn, for nurturing my love of choral music,
Thomas Handel, for his history lessons,
James Klein, my thesis supervisor,
the late **Dr. Peter Row** whose kindness and lessons I carry with me every day,
Patrick Keppel and **Ching Yeo**, for making work fun,
Thomas Oboe Lee, for being a mentor and a friend,
Stratis Minakakis, for making me rethink music,
Chinary Ung, for his guidance and the friendship we have between our families,
Alan Karass, for helping me with my graduate research proposal and establishing the little free library,
Corinne King, for graciously allowing to book all my rehearsals and this recital hall,
Thomas Novak, for giving me the permission to book this recital hall,
Bob Winters, AV, Stage Crew, Morgan Smallwood, for logistics and documenting this recital,
cousin **Malithévy**, **tata Loulou**, **tonton Alain**, **tonton Rithy** and **tata Lackhana**, because family,
Öznur, Clara, Robyn, Tatum, for listening to me, being patient with me, crying with me,
Reed, Kalli, Claire, Alejandro their love, and the fun they bring to my life,
everyone in **Cambodia** who has followed my career since,
Ariel and **Nan** for helping make our community happier through the Asian Student Association,
Nobby for playing my first composition seven years ago and conducting my pieces tonight,
and to all the **musicians**, many of whom are wonderful friends, for their time and collaboration tonight.

Thank you to NEC for the past seven years - the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Please stay in touch, and commission me.
Bosba

Donate to
my venmo or Paypal: @Bosba13
Angkor Hospital for Children: angkorhospital.org

Program

SATB	Two Choral movements - O Sacrum Convivium - O Magnum Mysterium	12"
song cycle	Father Mine	18"
solo piano	le peu de temps qu'il nous reste	6"
cello quartet	Cécile	9"
orchestra	Le Rêve	12"

all pieces were written between January 2018 and March 2019

LIVESTREAM: necmusic.edu/now-streaming-burnes-hall
password: NEC2019

Please join us for a reception after the recital.

MUSICIANS

TWO CHORAL MOVEMENTS

*Alexandra Purdy
Joanna Kim
Samantha Fox
Pauline Tan
Çınar Atilla
Richard Rivale
Johann Hartman
Tyler Bouque*

FATHER MINE

*Öznur Tülüoğlu
Richard Rivale*

CÉCILE

*Jennifer Su
Jake Taylor
Amanda Chi
Jonathan Salman*

LE PEU DE TEMPS QU'IL NOUS RESTE

Richard Rivale

LE RÊVE

*Flute I - Sarah Haines
Flute II - Xiaoyu Lin
Oboe I - Daniel Calahorra-Oliart
Oboe II/English Horn - Gillian Bobnak
Clarinet I in Bb - Paul Mardy
Clarinet II in Bb - Tristen Broadfoot
Bassoon - Han Yi Huang
Horn I - Jon H. McGarry
Horn II - Jessica Boyd
Horn III - Rebekah Lorenz
Horn IV - Alex Daiker
Trumpet in Bb - Mark Macha
Percussion I - Leigh Wilson
Percussion II/Timpani - Daniel McGee
Harp I - Charmaine Teo
Harp II - Liwei Huang*

*Violin I - Abigail Hong, Andrew Samara-Sekara,
Liyuan Xie, Hanks Tsai, Hannah Goldstick,
Minami Yoshida*

*Violin II - Tiffany Chang, Rachel Lim, Lawrence Wong,
Youjeong Yang, Richard Rivale*

*Viola - Abraham Martin, Nick Pelletier,
Andrew Hughes, Julia Chen*

*Cello - Jennifer Su, Mari Nagahara, Amanda Chi,
Jonathan Salman*

Double bass - Jesse Dale, Jacob Kalogerakos

CONDUCTOR

Nobuo Suganuma

ORCHESTRA MANAGER/LIBRARIAN

Bosba Panh

PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Elias Medina-Brewster

TWO CHORAL MOVEMENTS

O sacrum Convivium • O Magnum Mysterium

O sacrum convivium!
in quo Christus sumitur:
recolitur memoria passionis eius:
mens impletur gratia:
et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur.
Alleluia.

•
O Magnum Mysterium
O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
iacentem in praesepe!
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
meruerunt portare
Dominum Iesum Christum.
Alleluia!

O sacred banquet!
in which Christ is received,
the memory of his Passion is renewed,
the mind is filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory to us is given.
Alleluia.

•
O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see t
he new-born Lord,
lying in a manger!
Blessed is the Virgin whose womb
was worthy to bear
the Lord, Jesus Christ.
Alleluia!

FATHER MINE

*dedicated to my father
commissioned by Dr. Anne Harley, Scripps College*

I grew up in Cambodia as a singer and moved to the United States in 2012 to continue studies in voice before deciding to switch full-time to the composition when I was accepted to the New England Conservatory in Boston, MA. While I was fortunate that my family moved to the United States and was only a flight away from where I went to school, my move to this new country and my choice to change careers prompted an intellectual dispute between my father and I. This dispute arose not from the disagreement of having chosen to pursue a career in music - after all, it was my father who “baptized” me into music and initiated the first steps of my music education in Cambodia - but from the treatment in subject matter in choosing to pursue a Western-centered education and curriculum.

PANH MengHeang, second of nine children, was born in 1944 in South Cambodia. The family moved to Phnom Penh at the outbreak of the Vietnam War where my grandfather became a senator and member of the Education. Amidst the political turmoils of the second half of the 20th century, Cambodia was a small, thriving South-East Asian kingdom until April 17, 1975. My father was in France, finishing his Masters when Phnom Penh fell to the hands of the Khmers Rouges. The letters and calls stopped.

The Khmers Rouges Genocide (1975-1979) targeted the intelligentsia, members of the Buddhist monkhood, Vietnamese, Cham and Chinese communities and most of all, artists. In 1988, Cheng Phon, then Minister of Information and Culture estimated that 90% of Cambodian artists died under the Khmers Rouges while the other 10% were struggling to adjust with a post-war society. 70% of the material culture had been destroyed amongst the contents of the National Museums, the National Library, as anything pertaining to the education of the Khmer people. The Khmers Rouges, in their attempt to reorganize the Khmer society, had destroyed it, down to the family cell.

Every Cambodian family is affected by the Genocide. I certainly am in no position to speak about the choices and the trauma of my father and his siblings, as it is not my place to appropriate this event that I have not experienced. However, what I do live through are the secondary effects of the Genocide and how it has informed myself and affected my family through my father. My father, an enlightened but traditionalist man, has always been extremely concerned about his children forgetting their roots. The schism between traditions and the progressive mindset of Western education regularly divided my father and I. During my late teens, there was always the conversation that I was rejecting my traditions - and by extension my family - by pursuing a career in Western arts. I was very selfish, as any teenager would be, and I certainly got what I wanted: I am a full-time student composer, attending a US conservatory. My father was very proud when we received the acceptance letters. I understood much later the reason I could live my dream was in part because that he had given up part of his aspirations for me.

I chose to set poems by Elizabeth Bishop and Li-Young Lee because they all reminded me of my father, through the imagery and implied scenarios within the poems. I do not condone the exploitation of Cambodian culture, and its exotic exploitation and the way it is tokenized. By all means, the music does not sound "Cambodian-esque": it is informed by both my Western and Cambodian musical influences, and as a Cambodian woman, this represents the plurality of my identity. Along with each poem are interpretation notes of each poem within the framework of the effects of the Khmers Rouges Genocide on second generation artists and the inability to express love due to of a traumatic event.

I. Five Flight Up

Still dark.

The unknown bird sits on his usual branch.

The little dog next door barks in his sleep
inquiringly, just once.

Perhaps in his sleep, too, the bird inquires
once or twice, quavering.

Questions—if that is what they are—
answered directly, simply,
by day itself.

(...)

The bird still sits there. Now he seems to yawn.

The little black dog runs in his yard.

His owner's voice arises, stern,
"You ought to be ashamed!"

What has he done?

He bounces cheerfully up and down;
he rushes in circles (...)

Obviously, he has no sense of shame.

He and the bird know everything is answered,
all taken care of,
no need to ask again.

—Yesterday brought to today so lightly!

Interpretation Notes

There are two scenes in this poem: in the foreground, a bird and a little dog interact in a normal fashion - an everyday life scene. The peace of the scene is interrupted by a voice shouting "You ought to be ashamed!", in the background. Probably from inside the house or the porch. It is unclear whether this is directed to the dog or to somebody else in the house. The dog doesn't understand the concept of shame that is being berated at him. The human that is being berated does. Everything that happens to you has an explanation, everything is answered to the bird and the dog, whereas the human is absorbed into torturing itself by constantly asking why this is happening to them, even after getting an answer.

This poem for me represented the lightness of everyday life outside of my family, yet the burden of carrying the guilt and shame of having to conform to the expectations of my family, the Cambodian society, or Western society towards the Asian woman while struggling to find a voice while working in a progressive arts environment.

II. Casabianca

Love's the boy stood on the burning deck
trying to recite "The boy stood on
the burning deck." Love's the son
stood stammering elocution
while the poor ship in flames went down.

Love's the obstinate boy, the ship,
even the swimming sailors, who
would like a schoolroom platform, too,
or an excuse to stay
on deck. And love's the burning boy.

Interpretation Notes

The image of the boy represents my father when he is closing on himself. The sailors represent our family. In a sense, the boy is also myself. When we both shut yourself from the world (and to each other), while we are expecting others to show us clemency and love, it is a bit difficult to see that you have closed the door to accepting it in the first place. You have set yourself and your ship on fire, against your own will, but it isn't your fault. You have set your own ship on fire to feel some warmth, but now you are drowning. There is nothing left but a mixture of ashes and water.

III. Chemin de Fer (an echo across the pond)

Alone on the railroad track
I walked with pounding heart.
The ties were too close together
or maybe too far apart.

(...)
I saw the little pond
where the dirty old hermit lives,
lie like an old tear
holding onto its injuries
lucidly year after year.

The hermit shot off his shot-gun
and the tree by his cabin shook.
Over the pond went a ripple
The pet hen went chook-chook.

"Love should be put into action!"
screamed the old hermit.
Across the pond an echo
tried and tried to confirm it.

Interpretation Notes

This poem reminded me of days when I would try to speak to my father or stand in front of the door to his study as he refused to say goodbye before I had to go back to school, but he was unable to communicate. Many times, I thought that he stopped loving me as I would leave to go study and do the things that I love. I only understood later on that maybe it was difficult to see his child leave home, in the same way, he left home only to lose it in the Genocide.

As the hermit shouts "Love should be put into action!", the echo confirming it across the pond represent both myself and my father unable to show our love and concern for each other.



IV. Conversation

The tumult in the heart
keeps asking questions.
And then it stops and undertakes to answer
in the same tone of voice.
No one could tell the difference.

Uninnocent, these conversations start,
and then engage the senses,
only half-meaning to.
And then there is no choice,
and then there is no sense;

until a name
and all its connotation are the same.

Interpretation Notes

“Conversation” aptly reflects the essence of how traumatic events affects second-generation artists’ perception of love, and affection and how to express it. I found that a lot of the themes I chose to write on or about dealing with loss and sacrifice, and I always interpret love poems in a sad, melancholic mood. Part of it has to do with how the history of Cambodia and its cultural melancholy (much like Persian music) has pervaded into the fabric of my identity; part of it has to do with how much it has affected my family dynamics and how things always seem to always come back to the same connotation, but not necessarily the same source.

V. Father Mine

by Li-Young Lee (b.1957)

I buried my father in my heart.
Now he grows in me, my strange [child],
My little root who won't drink milk,
Little pale foot sunk in unheard-of night,
Little clock spring newly wet
In the fire, little grape, parent to the future
Wine, a [child] the fruit of his own [child],
Little father I ransom [you] with my life.

Interpretation Notes

I chose a different author for the last poem of the cycle because this poem was much more explicit about my relationship with my father. For many years, I had doubted the love and dedication my father was giving me, because it did not appear like the Western portrayal of affection and love. I buried this father figure inside of me. I am ashamed to have doubted that love, yet I know I was too young to see it, and too naive to realize it. I owe to my father my life, and being his daughter and continuing the legacy of educated women in our family is one of the greatest honours to carry. With my father, however, always stood my mother, quietly supporting him and all of us. I hope one day to learn to love the world as much as they love me, and to be loved as much as they love me.

LE PEU DE TEMPS QU'IL NOUS RESTE

Translated to "the little time that is left for us", this short piano étude was originally written as a class assignment and style study of Claude Debussy's books of piano études.

I wrote this étude when I was in the mood for love, knowing I had but a very short window of time to bask in its waves.

CÉCILE

Commissioned by Eunghee Cho

Cécile is inspired by the novel *Bonjour Tristesse* (Hello Sadness) by Françoise Sagan. The story goes:

Cécile, a carefree teenager, has spent her childhood in boarding schools. She has been living with her father, Raymond, a widow who is in his forties. They lead an idyllic existence where Cécile enjoys great freedom while her father has many mistresses. One summer, Cécile, her father Raymond, and Elsa, his mistress, are on holiday on the Côte d'Azur, in Southern France. Anne, a friend of Raymond's late wife and who Raymond's has vaguely invited to the villa shows up. Anne, who is closer in Raymond's age, is a sophisticated, educated woman unlike Elsa. Quickly, Anne disrupts the peaceful life at the villa: she sleeps with Raymond, announces their engagement, which prompts Elsa's leave.

Cécile is not happy, as Anne criticizes her idle lifestyle and her lack of intellectual ambitions. Cécile derives a plan with her summer fling, Cyril, by convincing him and Elsa to show up together as a couple at strategic points during their stay so make her father jealous. Raymond, unable to resist this provocation, seeks Elsa. Anne surprises them by chance in the nearby woods. Desperately, she takes her car and drives off a cliff. Cécile and her father go back to their life, but Cécile is now feeling a new feeling: sadness.

"Only when I'm in my bed, at dawn, with only the noise of cars in Paris, my memory sometimes betrays me: the summer comes back with all my memories. Anne, Anne! I repeat this name in a low murmur and for a very long time in the dark. Something then comes up in me, that I welcome by name with my eyes closed: Hello Sadness."

Though the musical form of the quartet doesn't follow the form of the novel, the essence of the music is very much inspired by the story and the delicacy of Sagan's writing (who wrote *Bonjour Tristesse* at 18!), and the poem by Paul Éluard which inspired the title of the novel.

“À Peine Défigurée”

poem by Paul Éluard, from *La vie immédiate*, 1932

Adieu tristesse,
Bonjour tristesse.
Tu es inscrite dans les lignes du plafond.
Tu es inscrite dans les yeux que j'aime
Tu n'es pas tout à fait la misère,
Car les lèvres les plus pauvres te dénoncent
Par un sourire.
Bonjour tristesse.
Amour des corps aimables.
Puissance de l'amour
Dont l'amabilité surgit
Comme un monstre sans corps.
Tête désappointée.
Tristesse, beau visage.

Farewell Sadness
Hello Sadness
You are inscribed in the lines on the ceiling
You are inscribed in the eyes that I love
You are not poverty absolutely
Since the poorest of lips denounce you
Ah with a smile
Bonjour Tristesse
Love of kind bodies
Power of love
From which kindness rises
Like a bodiless monster
Unattached head
Sadness beautiful face

LE RÊVE

Poser sa tête sur un oreiller
Et sur cet oreiller dormir
Et dormant rêver
À des choses curieuses ou d'avenir,
Rêvant croire à ce qu'on rêve
Et rêvant garder la notion
De la vie qui passe sans trêve
Du soir à l'aube sans rémission.
Ceci est presque normal,
Ceci est presque délicieux
Mais je plains ceux
Qui dorment vite et mal,
Et, mal éveillés, rêvent en marchant.
Ainsi j'ai marché autrefois,
J'ai marché, agi en rêvant,
Prenant les rues pour les allées d'un bois.
Une place pour les rêves
Mais les rêves à leur place.

To place one's head on a pillow
And on this pillow, sleep
And in sleeping, to dream
Of curious things or future things,
Dreaming to believe in what you dream
And dreaming, keeping the notion
Of life that passes without stopping
From evening to dawn without interruption.
This is almost normal,
This is almost delicious,
But I pity those
Who sleep quickly and bad,
And, poorly awake, dream while walking.
As I have walked in the past,
I walked, acted while dreaming,
Taking the streets for woods' paths.
A place for dreams
But dreams are in their place.

- Robert Desnos
État de Veille (1936)

Bosba (b.1997) is a Cambodian raised, Western-educated composer. Influenced by French expressionism, European sacred music and American minimalism, her music explores the theme of loss, love and sacrifice while being accessible to an audience that ranges from music connoisseurs to amateurs. Her experience as a Cambodian folk singer and classical performance singer informs the lyricism of her music.

Prior to composition, Bosba began her career in Cambodia as a traditional folk singer at the age of 7. Her parents managed her vocal career. Their collaboration with Cambodian artists led to performances at venues such as Angkor Wat, the 13th-century UNESCO heritage site of temples. These eight years in Cambodia produced 3 CDs, 5 singles and 3 DVDs from concerts as well as countless humanitarian efforts in collaboration with hospitals such as the Angkor Hospital for Children and working for clean water and arts education initiatives. Bosba attended the Lycée Français René Descartes of Phnom Penh, and is a former Cambodian Judo Olympic team member and triple national champion.

Bosba moved to the United States in 2012 to further her studies in music as a vocal performance major at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Natick, MA. While at WHS, she began studying composition with Dr Whitman Brown which led to a full-time career change. She now attends the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) in Boston, MA studying under Michael Gandolfi, chair of composition studies, and Ken Schaphorst, chair of jazz studies.

Outside of composition, Bosba has interests in arts policy and management, ornithology and working in providing quality western music education in Cambodia, and developing a standardized notation system to complement Cambodia's traditional music. Amongst her musical influences are Herbert Howells, Leonard Bernstein, Debussy, Ravel, Philip Glass, Bill Evans, João Gilberto, Bernard Herrmann, and Arctic Monkeys.

learn more at www.bosbapanh.com

As of now, the NEC composition does not require graduating recitals. I hope this recital pushes more students to present recitals outside of our current outlets. My wish it that one day all students at NEC will be equally celebrated, regardless of their major.

