A Vision of Paradise A Retrospective Inspired by Byzantine Chant

Paul Barnes

pianist and chanter

Ruth Meints, violin Melissa Tatreau Holtmeier, violin Clark Potter, viola Karen Becker, cello

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Choir

Wednesday, Jan 31, 2024 7:30pm Westbrook Recital Hall Glenn Korff School of Music

Co-sponsored by Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church

-Program-

Dreaming, Op. 15 No.3 (1892)

Amy Beach (1867-1944)

Dedicated to the memory of Menahem Pressler

From Piano Concerto No.2 "After Lewis and Clark" (2004) III. The Land

Philip Glass (b.1937)

Arranged by Paul Barnes

Dedicated to the memory of Ron Hull

Megalynarion of the Nativity Kontakion of the Nativity

arranged by Kevin Lawrence

Variations on the Incarnation (2023) Nebraska Premiere (b.1953)

J.A.C. Redford

-Intermission-

Apolytikion of the Annunciation Communion Hymn of the Annunciation

arranged by Kevin Lawrence

Piano Quintet "Annunciation" (2018) Part One

Philip Glass

Part One Part Two

Program Notes

A Vision of Paradise

On January 31st, 1994, I was received into the Orthodox Church after a lifetime search for a tradition that integrated truth and beauty within a liturgical and spiritual practice upon which I and my young family would draw upon for the rest of our lives. The emphasis within the Orthodox Christian tradition is one of direct participation in the grace and energy of God made possible by the incarnation. This reality is continually reinforced by the understanding that a human being is profoundly loved by her Creator and that this love can emanate to all others within her orbit. There is a profound emphasis on beauty and that even amid the pain and ugliness of temporal reality, we are given a clarifying vision of paradise that confirms our true destiny as human beings made in the image of God.

I would later discover that January 31st was also the birthday of Philip Glass, a composer who would radically alter the trajectory of my career as a musician. Tonight's program features the two works which I commissioned from Glass over that past several years and so in a way is a retrospective of our work together. And the new work receiving its Nebraska premiere tonight from my dear friend and composer J.A.C. Redford represents the latest incarnation of the wealth of new works I've commissioned based on the Orthodox Byzantine chant tradition.

Other works on tonight's program reflect individuals, both who passed away in 2023, who have profoundly influenced both my access to the inner life of music and my live-changing relationships with my supporters. My beloved teacher Menahem Pressler profoundly affected my entire approach to the piano by completely engaging my ears to hear musical detail previously unheard. And my dear friend Ron Hull was a lifetime supporter of my work and inspired me to dream big about the musical projects I envisioned. Without his inspiration, I'm convinced that both the Piano Concerto No. 2 "After Lewis and Clark" and the Piano Quintet "Annunciation" would never have been written.

Dreaming, Op.15 No.2 (1892) by Amy Beach

I have been in love with this gem of a piano piece ever since I heard it a few years ago. The similarity of its beautiful undulating opening with the opening of Philip Glass's "The Land" from the Piano Concerto No.2 compelled me to finally program both back-to-back. The Beach has that perfect balance between contrapuntal insight and a rich, colorful harmonic palate. I dedicate this performance to my teacher Menahem Pressler who passed away last year at the age of 99. He would have been 100 on December 16th, 2023, and shared this birthday with Beethoven. I owe my understanding of rich melodic tone and the physical means to produce this tone to my years with him.

The Land, from Piano Concerto No.2 (After Lewis and Clark) by Philip Glass

On the fateful morning of September 11, 2001, I met with Mike Zeleny from the University of

Nebraska about the possibility of raising money to commission Philip Glass to write a piano concerto commemorating the Lewis and Clark expedition. When I initially approached Glass about basing the new work on Lewis and Clark, he was particularly interested in the challenging task of presenting both the white and the Native American perspective. The commissioning of the new concerto was funded by the Nebraska Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission, the Lied Center for Performing Arts, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts. Without the vision and financial support of this consortium, the work would not have been possible.

The third and final movement entitled "The Land" is a gloriously expansive theme and variations reflecting the great vastness of the land explored by Lewis and Clark. And this expansiveness refers not only to the vast area involved, but the expanse of time over which the land has evolved. As Glass commented in our final working session on the concerto in July of 2004, "I wanted this final movement to reflect also the expanse of time - what the land was before the expedition and what it became after." The movement begins with an extended introduction followed by the initial statement of the theme. This stately theme derived both from the closing measures of the first movement and the opening theme of the Sacagawea movement is characterized by large, opulent chords animated by unusual inner lines creating a Bach-like relationship between the vertical chord structures and the inner voices. My solo transcription includes settings of Variations I, IV, and VI with my cadenza preceding the sixth variation.

The world premiere performance of Glass's Piano Concerto No.2 (After Lewis and Clark) took place in Lincoln, Nebraska on September 18th, 2004, with the Omaha Symphony at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. The world premier recording with the Northwest Chamber Orchestra was released by Orange Mountain Music in October of 2006 and Barnes' solo transcription was released in February of 2008. Both are available on iTunes.

My dear friend Ron Hull who served as chairman of the Nebraska Bicentennial Lewis and Clark Commission passed away last year. Ron specifically requested that I play this movement at his funeral which I did last April. Without Ron's commitment and immense fund-raising talent, this piece would not exist. This performance is dedicated to his memory.

Megalynarion of the Nativity

Magnify, O my soul, the woman more hon'rable And more glorious than the powers of heaven. I see a myst'ry strange and most wondrous: The cave has become heaven, The Virgin, the throne of the cherubim. The manger holds Him who cannot be held or contained, Christ our God, whom we praise and magnify.

Kontakion of the Nativity of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent One.

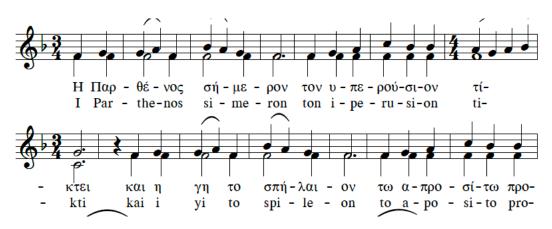
And the earth presents a cave to the unapproachable One. Angels, with shepherds give Him glory.
Wise men follow a star as they journey to Him Who is God from all ages,
Yet for our sake was born as a little child.
St. Romanos the Melodist, 6th century

Variations on the Incarnation (2023) by J.A.C. Redford

I first met composer and orchestrator J.A.C. Redford fifteen years ago when I performed in Oxford UK at the 2008 Oxbridge conference hosted by the CS Lewis Foundation. I am thrilled to be collaborating with him on a commission by the faculty of the St. Constantine School and College in Houston which I premiered in Houston at the 2023 Vision Conference on July 27th. The work is in honor of Dr. John Mark Reynold's philosophy teacher Al Geier and based on the venerable Greek Orthodox hymn on the nativity of Christ composed by St. Romanos the Melodist in the 6th century. I've been singing this hymn for over thirty years now as the head chanter of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and each year the liturgical experience of the incarnation reveals new layers of meaning. The work begins with my favorite Greek word – σήμερον (simeron) – today. Emphasizing the platonic ideal of actual participation in the creative cause, the opening phrase "Today the virgin gives birth, to the transcendent One" invites the listener to participate in the eternal present that marks liturgical reality in the Orthodox church. We are not just remembering a past event but entering the reality made possible by that divine event! As the nativity of God made possible our complete union with God who is now fully human, our human nature is mystically joined to Christ through sacramental participation in the love events of the church.

Like most Orthodox hymns, the text of the nativity kontakion explores the deep paradox of the incarnation as the creator of the universe is born as a little child; and the One who cannot be contained is contained in the womb of the virgin, the most holy Theotokos.

JAC's beautiful work is a theme and variations and begins with an important three-part introduction reflecting the triune reality of the existence of God. After this introduction which returns at key structural moments throughout the work, the hymn is presented in its entirety with minimal harmonization.





Variation one features an introspective and warm harmonization while variations two and three feature traditional rhythmic diminution, a feature of many variations sets from the depth of the piano literature. Variation four is a gentle pastorale in A-flat major (a key briefly referenced in the preceding variations) leading to a wildly contrasting and violent variation five. As this variation dissipates, a *ppp* hint of the theme returns before the majestic and triumphal variation six. As this variation concludes, the introduction returns with a quiet and peaceful ending on this musical meditation on the incarnation of Christ.

The composer describes his vision as inspired by the text of the hymn:

The text prompted references to ancient Christian spirituality within the music itself. The introduction, interlude and conclusion are made up of three essential phrases, echoing Trinitarian thought. The first descends in resonance with the condescension of God becoming man in the Incarnation, the second ascends in harmony with the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the third descends again, as does the New Jerusalem at the ultimate restoration of all things. The first three variations unfold as does the life and ministry of Jesus with increasing complexity. The fourth may be heard as accompaniment to the first Holy Thursday, which Christ spent with his disciples in the upper room on the eve of his crucifixion. and during which he washed their feet, taught them about the depths of love, and introduced the Eucharist. The *furioso* reflects the violence of Good Friday, the stillness of its refrain the numbness of Holy Saturday, and the triumphal sixth variation the glory of Easter.

Apolytikion of the Annunciation

Today is the beginning of our salvation,
And the revelation of a mystery which was hidden from eternity.
The Son of God becomes the Virgin's son,
And Gabriel announces the grace of this Good News.
Let us also with join with him,

Calling to the Theotokos: Rejoice, O woman full of grace, The Lord is with you.

Communion Hymn of the Annunciation (Psalm 133:13)

The Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired her for His habitation.

Piano Quintet "Annunciation" (2018) by Philip Glass

One of my very first conversations with Philip Glass soon after we met in the mid 90s explored the musical and spiritual intersection of Buddhist and Eastern Christian byzantine chant. This mutual interest has culminated in Glass's latest composition, the Piano Quintet "Annunciation."

I also serve as head chanter of Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Lincoln, Nebraska and sang the beautiful byzantine communion hymn of the Annunciation for Glass in January of 2017. Glass then agreed to base his first piano quintet on this melody and to title the work "Annunciation." The text of the hymn comes from Psalm 133:13, "The Lord has chosen Zion, he has desired her for his dwelling place."

The work is in two parts. The Part One opens with a meditative chromatic chord progression which eventually leads to the first entrance of the chant first stated in the piano. Glass develops this beautiful theme as it is shared by the various members of the quintet culminating in an opulent neo-romantic closing section recapping the introductory chromatic chord progression. A partial restatement of the theme ends the movement with a brooding D minor coda. Part Two is a poignant musical meditation on Part One revealing Glass's innate ability to connect the transcendental ethos of the original chant with his own spacious approach to musical time. A particularly expressive section features the piano in soaring sparse octave melody over undulating eighth notes in the violin and cello. The work ends with an increasingly energetic and ecstatic 7/8 coda based on the opening chant transformed into scale passages that ascend and dissipate into a pianissimo chromatic flourish evocative of incense rising.

I gave the world premiere performance with the Chiara Quartet at the Lied Center for Performing Arts on April 17, 2018. The Journal Star described the performance as "meditative...striking...touchingly played by Barnes and the Chiara Quartet, "Annunciation" is a romantic, late-period Glass masterwork." Fred Child, host of APR's Performance Today was present for the premiere and wrote: "Pianist Paul Barnes put together and performed a thrilling evening of music!" Barnes' interview with Glass and Fred Child was featured on Performance Today in late June along with the broadcast of the world premiere performance. The New York premiere took place on May 12, 2018 in the Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York Classical Review called the quintet a "fascinating mosaic of Glass's late style...with a warm inner expression that seemed to echo Brahms." And New York Music Daily labeled the quintet "magically direct...lushly glittering." Barnes recording of the quintet with Brooklyn Rider was released in October of 2019. ResMusica in

Paris wrote: "Paul Barnes, whose pianistic lines are always clear, is a marvel of dialogue with Brooklyn Rider."

J.A.C. Redford is a composer, arranger, orchestrator and conductor of concert, chamber and choral music, film, television and theater scores, and music for recordings. Artists and ensembles that have performed his work include: Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Joshua Bell, Liona Boyd, Cantus, Chicago Symphony, De Angelis Vocal Ensemble, Debussy Trio, Israel Philharmonic, Kansas City Chorale, Los Angeles Chamber Singers, Los Angeles Master Chorale, Anne Akiko Meyers, Millennium Consort Singers, New York Philharmonic, Phoenix Chorale, Staatskapelle Dresden, St. Martin's Chamber Choir, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Utah Chamber Artists and Utah Symphony.

His music has been featured on programs at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., the Lincoln Center in New York, Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and London's Royal Albert Hall. He composed the Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission for the American Choral Directors Association 2017 National Conference in Minneapolis, MN.

Redford has written the scores for more than three dozen feature films, TV movies or miniseries, including The Trip to Bountiful, One Night with the King, What the Deaf Man Heard, Mama Flora's Family and Disney's Oliver & Company, Newsies and The Mighty Ducks II and III. He has composed the music for nearly 500 episodes of series television, including multiple seasons of Coach and St. Elsewhere (for which he received two Emmy® nominations). His incidental music has been heard in theatrical productions at the Matrix Theater in Los Angeles and South Coast Repertory Theater in Costa Mesa, California, as well as in the American Playhouse series on PBS. Two of his musical comedies are published by Dramatic Publishing and performed frequently across North America.

Collaborating with other artists, Redford has orchestrated, arranged or conducted for Academy Award®-winning composers, James Horner, Alan Menken, Randy Newman, Rachel Portman and John Williams, as well as for Terence Blanchard, Danny Elfman, Simon Franglen, Mark Isham, Thomas Newman, Marc Shaiman, and Cirque du Soleil's Benoit Jutras, on projects including The Little Mermaid, The Nightmare Before Christmas, The Perfect Storm, WALL-E, Avatar, Skyfall, Bridge of Spies, 1917 and most recently Avatar: The Way of Water, A Man Called Otto and Elemental. He orchestrated and conducted Adele's Oscarwinning title song for Skyfall, wrote arrangements for Joshua Bell's Voice of the Violin, At Home with Friends, Musical Gifts and The Classical Collection recordings as well as Anne Akiko Meyers' Serenade: The Love Album, and has written for and recorded with other Grammy Award®-winning artists Steven Curtis Chapman, Bonnie Raitt and Sting.

He has produced, arranged, and conducted music for the Los Angeles Master Chorale, and served as a consultant for the Sundance Film Institute, a teacher in the Artists-in-Schools program for the National Endowment for the Arts, a guest lecturer at USC and UCLA, and on the Music Branch Executive Committees for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Redford's music is published by Hal

Leonard, G. Schirmer, Roger Dean, Mark Foster, Fred Bock, Fatrock Ink and Plough Down Sillion Music. He is the author of Welcome All Wonders: A Composer's Journey, published by Baker Books. His many recordings include eight collections of his concert, chamber and choral music, The Alphabet of Revelation, Confessiones, Eternity Shut in a Span, Evening Wind, The Growing Season, Inside Passage, Let Beauty Be Our Memorial and Waltzing with Shadows.

Paul Barnes, pianist

Praised by the New York Times for his "Lisztian thunder and deft fluidity," and the San Francisco Chronicle as "ferociously virtuosic," pianist Paul Barnes has electrified audiences with his intensely expressive playing and cutting-edge programming. He has been featured seven times on APM's *Performance Today* and on the cover of Clavier Magazine with his recordings streamed worldwide.

Celebrating his twenty-five-year collaboration with Philip Glass, Barnes commissioned and gave the world premiere of Glass's *Piano Quintet "Annunciation."* The work is Glass's first piano quintet and first work based on Greek Orthodox chant. Barnes' recording of the quintet with string quartet superstars Brooklyn Rider was released in October of 2019 to critical acclaim. *ResMusica* in Paris wrote: "Paul Barnes, whose pianistic lines are always clear, is a marvel of dialogue with Brooklyn Rider."

Barnes' twelfth CD <u>New Generations: The New Etudes of Philip Glass and Music of the Next Generation</u> has also received rave reviews. Gramophone Magazine wrote, "Pianists of Barnes's great technique and musicality are a boon to new music." And American Record Guide commented, "This disc provides further proof of Barnes's ability to communicate new music with flair and passion." Produced by Orange Mountain Music, the recording features the world-premiere recording of *Dreaming Awake*, a selection of Glass's etudes and works by N. Lincoln Hanks, Lucas Floyd, Jason Bahr, Zack Stanton, Ivan Moody, and Jonah Gallagher.

Barnes is Marguerite Scribante Professor of Music at the <u>University of Nebraska-Lincoln Glenn Korff School of Music</u>. He was recently appointed Artistic Director of the <u>Lied Center Piano Academy</u> which welcomes several high-school pianists to Lincoln each summer for an intensive week of piano, composition, improvisation and collaboration. He will also be teaching this summer in Greece at the <u>Piano Plus Summer Institute</u>. In great demand as a pedagogue and clinician, Barnes has served as convention artist at several state MTNA conventions, most recently at Virginia and Georgia and was named 'Teacher of the Year" by the Nebraska Music Teachers Association.

Barnes latest recital *Illumination* features a contemplative and cathartic program of piano works inspired by the mystical world of chant. Barnes, also a Greek Orthodox chanter, has collaborated most recently with Philip Glass and Victoria Bond to create piano works based on ancient byzantine and Jewish chant. New chant-based works by Native American flutist Ron Warren and David von Kampen are also given their premiere performances. Barnes gave the world premiere of Victoria Bond's *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant* at New York's Symphony Space in April of 2021. Barnes released his fourteenth recording last fall on Albany Records entitled *Illumination: The Piano Works of Victoria Bond* including the world-premiere recording of *Illuminations on Byzantine Chant*. American Record Guide wrote "he sings with haunting

musicality...and plays with fervid virtuosity...the music is calm and meditative, perfect for these troubled times."

Barnes recently gave the world premiere performance of "The Way of Mountains and Desert" by Native composer Ron Warren. The work explores Native themes of creation and beauty, and Barnes world premiere performance was recently uploaded to his YouTube channel. Barnes is currently collaborating with Hollywood film composer JAC Redford on a new work inspired by the incarnational writing of Plato which was premiered at the St. Constantine School in Houston in July of 2023. Barnes' recordings are available on Spotify, Pandora, ITunes, Apple Music, YouTube, and Amazon.

Karen Becker is Professor of Cello in the UNL Glenn Korff School of Music. She has performed in concert and given masterclasses around the world in venues such as the American String Teachers National Association, the International Cello Institute, Ameropa Music Festival in Prague, Omaha Conservatory's SoundWaves, and Red Lodge Music Festival. Becker is cellist of the Becker-Bogard Duo and the Concordia String Trio (CST). The duo's recording, *American Landscapes* (2023), and CST's recordings are available for streaming. In 2021 Becker gave the Nebraska premiere of Swedish composer Kurt Atterberg's beautiful neoromantic cello concerto with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra, for which she plays principal cello. Becker has recorded for several PBS documentaries and independent films and has been featured numerous times on American Public Media's *Performance Today*.

Melissa Holtmeier is a full-time Artist-Faculty member and String Department Chair at the Omaha Conservatory of Music. In addition, Mrs. Holtmeier is the music specialist at Phoenix Academy (grades K-8) and also has her 200 RYT in yoga. In 2019, Holtmeier was awarded Outstanding Private Teacher of the Year by the Nebraska chapter of the American String Teachers Association. She also served as NE-ASTA's state president in 2020-2022. Holtmeier is currently sitting on ASTA's national studio teacher committee and is a board member of the Omaha Musicians' Union (AFM local 70-558), the Intergeneration Orchestra of Omaha, and the Omaha Conservatory of Music.

Holtmeier has performed with Mary J. Blige, Bobby Vinton, Frank Sinatra Jr., Rod Stewart, Josh Groban, Pam Tillis, The Lettermen, Michael W. Smith, Johnny Mathis, Michael Buble, the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, Jane Lynch, Idina Menzel, The Eagles and Mannheim Steamroller. You can catch close ups of Melissa on Mannheim's PBS special: 30/40 LIVE! She both performs and is orchestra contractor for several cities on their annual Christmas tour. Holtmeier is a founding member and the 1st violinist in the Mahr String Quartet for which she contracts around 70 events annually. Melissa subs often with the Omaha and Lincoln Symphonies and has toured both China and the U.S. with the Mantovani Orchestra. Holtmeier is the local violin/violist for the Broadway tours Little House on the Prairie, Westside Story, The Lion King, The Book of Mormon (3x), Kinky Boots, Newsies, Cinderella, Phantom of the Opera (3x), Something Rotten, The Sound of Music, The Little Mermaid, The King and I and Ain't Too Proud: The Life and Times of The Temptations.

Ruth Meints became the Artistic Director of the Omaha Conservatory of Music (OCoM) in the fall of 2023 and was the former Executive Director from 2005-2023. Her career has elevated

music education in the state of Nebraska and across the country in many unique and groundbreaking ways. While at OCoM, she has developed many music education programs, such as OCoM's Summer camp programs, Winter Festival Orchestra, a full music program at the St. Augustine Indian Mission School, as well as the Inside the Mind of the Artist recital and master class series. She authored the String Sprouts curriculum, which launched in 2013. String Sprouts enrolls over one thousand preschoolers from underserved areas and provides an instrument for all five years of instruction at no cost to qualifying families. String Sprouts programs are spreading across the country, currently with sites in Kansas City, Washington DC, Richmond, San Francisco, Steamboat, and internationally in Penomoné, Panama.

She currently teaches violin and viola at OCoM and conducts various workshops around the country in violin/viola pedagogy and music education, integrating current neuroscience findings into music teaching. She is the only Suzuki teacher trainer in the state of Nebraska and enjoys helping other teachers expand their pedagogical expertise. Her teaching experience has also included head of the string department at Azusa Pacific University and faculty at Biola University in the Los Angeles area, as well as faculty at San Jose Talent Education, Omaha Talent Education, and Artist-Faculty at the Omaha Conservatory of Music.

In 2016, Ruth was given the Governor's Arts Award for excellence in arts education sponsored by Nebraska Arts Council and Nebraska Cultural Endowment. In 2019, she also presented a TedXOmaha talk entitled "Music, Preschoolers, and Poverty." Ruth has published two books, The Music Teacher's Little Guide to Big Motivation and In Tune with God's Word: Spiritual Themes for the Young Musician. Ruth received her Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and her Master of Music degree with an emphasis in Suzuki pedagogy from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville with John Kendall, pioneer in bringing the Suzuki philosophy to the United States. Ruth lives in Omaha with her husband Ken and has three sons, Dryden, Aldric, and Skyler.

Clark Potter is Professor of Viola in the Glenn Korff School of Music at UNL where he also serves on the conducting faculty. He is an active soloist and recitalist, performing in several different chamber ensembles. He is the conductor of the Lincoln Youth Symphony and stays busy as a clinician with young orchestras. His research interests include the cellos suites of Bach, developing breathing techniques for string players, and the concert music of film composer Ernest Gold.

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Choir

I serve as both proto-psalti (head chanter) and choir director at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church here in Lincoln. Our choir has the unique privilege of singing both traditional and harmonized byzantine chant acapella for the Divine Liturgy held each Sunday morning and on major feast days. I still have such great memories as a child singing hymns in beautiful four-part harmony and never imagined that I would be doing this in the context of the Orthodox liturgy years later. Our community is blessed with members from all over the planet, and we affirm this diversity every Sunday as we say the Lord's Prayer in eleven languages. All are welcome and if you sing, please join us in the choir!

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church Choir

Soprano: Wendy Leiter, Dori Nelson, Ramiel Christensen, Stamatia Deligiannis Alto: Sanda Mašic, Eva Nikolaidou, Tierra Cassens Tenor: Joel Davies, Greg Wells, Jack Carlson Bass: Paul Barnes, John Cassens, Daniel Ikpeama