

# Jeff Quartets



The Crossing  
in concert  
at the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill  
Friday, July 8, 2016 at 8:00pm

**Jeff Quartets**

a legacy project  
celebrating the life and work of Jeffrey Dinsmore

What he meant to say is not there, for he understood something else, something that was all-embracing, and he could not say it in words but only by living as he did. Only by being so frankly himself as he was till his death could he give something to all men.

—*The Baron in the Trees*, Italo Calvino

## Part I

You are Most Welcome	Kile Smith
First Pink	Paul Fowler
Ahania Weeping	Louis Andriessen
For Orpheus	William Brooks
A Jeff Quartet for 4 Voices	Bo Holten
Thousand Waves	Santa Ratniece
Translation	Ēriks Ešenvalds

## Intermission

make peace	David Lang
Sumptuous Planet	David Shapiro
Dear World	Lansing D. McLoskey
Empire of Crystal	Benjamin C.S. Boyle
The Beautiful Land of Nod	Robert Convery
Gentle Soul, Find Peace	Lewis Spratlan
Yes, I am your Angel	Gabriel Jackson
What It Might Say	Ted Hearne

Jeff Quartets was made possible through a generous grant from The Ann Stookey Fund for New Music, with additional support from John and Mary Anne O'Meara, the composers and their publishers, and those who have contributed to The Jeffrey Dinsmore Memorial Fund @ The Crossing.

Join us tomorrow afternoon, July 9 from 4-6pm, for a reception celebrating Jeff, our 10th Anniversary, and the end of another season at The Crossing – all are welcome.

Please support The Jeffrey Dinsmore Memorial Fund by purchasing the special edition of all fifteen quartets – available in the narthex.

## **The Crossing**

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Colin Dill

Micah Dinger

Robert Eisentrout

Ryan Fleming

Joanna Gates

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Steven Hyder

Mike Jones

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Heidi Kurtz

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Rebecca Oehlers

James Reese

Rebecca Siler

Dan Schwartz

Dan Spratlan

Elisa Sutherland

Shari Wilson

Donald Nally, conductor

John Grecia, accompanist

Steven Gearhart, assistant conductor

## Words and Notes

### YOU ARE MOST WELCOME

by Kile Smith (b.1956)

setting excerpts from emails written to the composer by Jeff Dinsmore

*We thank the Hand Van de Water Memorial for generously sponsoring the singers of the quartet in this performance.*

Jeff and Kile worked together on producing the latter's *Where Flames a Word* for *The Celan Project*, our first large commissioning project for The Month of Moderns 2009, our first festival. *The Waking Sun* followed for *Seneca Sounds* in The Month of Moderns 2012, written for The Crossing and Tempesta del Mare.

You are most welcome.

I hope all is well in the new year for you.

I know you aren't finished yet,  
but would you mind taking  
a few minutes to chat with him?

I can give you much higher resolution.  
I shot all the ones from the recording  
so you can use whatever.

You can use whatever you want.  
I love the shot of you and your daughter,  
and yes, you look relieved.

On the way to you.

Should be soon.

Hope all is well.

Best,  
Jeff

## FIRST PINK

by Paul Fowler (b.1978)

setting a poem by Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer (b. 1969)

Jeff worked to bring Paul's *Breath* to life, another early commission, for *The Levine Project* in The Month of Moderns 2010. Paul's *Potter's Clay* is heard on our CD of music for women's choir, *I want to live*, 2011; his *Echoes* was written for that recording.

In the loss

is a branch  
with a brittle  
stem  
where an old  
fruit hangs  
rust-colored  
and dried  
beside  
a tight cluster  
of rose-tipped buds  
where something  
fragile  
and persistent  
is just  
beginning  
to open.

*"First Pink" used with the permission of Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer;  
www.wordwoman.com.*

## AHANIA WEEPING

by Louis Andriessen (b.1939)

setting an excerpt from *The Book of Ahania* (Chapter 5, verses 1, 2, 6, 7, 14) by William Blake (1757-1827)

*[bracketed text omitted by the composer]*

It was Louis' *De Materie* that we were preparing to sing with the Los Angeles Philharmonic when Jeff passed suddenly at Disney Hall. Louis indicates that *Ahania Weeping* should be sung by eight voices, a nod to the forces required for *De Materie*, bringing to memory that one

of those eight was missing from that performance, as shown in a now-iconic photo in *The Los Angeles Times*.

*Ahania Weeping* is sung by the seven singers with Jeff in LA at the time of his passing, plus James, who became a regular member of The Crossing in Jeff's absence.

1. The lamenting voice of Ahania,  
Weeping upon the Void!  
And round the Tree of Fuzon,  
[Distant in solitary night,]  
Her voice was heard, [but no form  
Had she; but] her tears from clouds  
Eternal fell round the Tree.

2. And the voice cried: 'Ah, Urizen! Love!  
[Flower of morning! I weep on the verge  
Of Nonentity—how wide the Abyss  
Between Ahania and thee!]

6. ['Where is my golden palace?  
Where my ivory bed?  
Where the joy of my morning hour?]  
Where the Sons of Eternity singing,

7. 'To awake bright Urizen, my King,  
[To arise to the mountain sport,  
To the bliss of eternal valleys;]

14. ['But now alone! over rocks, mountains,  
Cast out from thy lovely bosom!  
Cruel Jealousy, selfish Fear,  
Self-destroying!] how can delight  
Renew in these chains of darkness,  
[Where bones of beasts are strown  
On the bleak and snowy mountains,]  
Where bones from the birth are buried  
Before they see the light?'

## FOR ORPHEUS

by William Brooks (b.1943)

setting the poem “Jeff Dinsmore Acrostic Elegy” written for Jeff Quartets  
by Pierre Joris (b.1946)

Jeff knew Pierre well from our close collaboration on *The Gulf (between you and me)* – The Month of Moderns 2013 – for which Pierre wrote all the words. We have worked with Bill a number of times: on a large work he arranged for our recording, *I want to live*, and then again last summer on *in memoriam reducere studemus* – an earlier collaboration with Pierre that we programmed to mark Jeff’s passing. When we asked Bill to write a Jeff Quartet, he immediately turned to Pierre to renew their collaboration.

Like Orpheus, for you, **J**eff, we finger the strings of life  
to play in sorrow and d**E**ep choral dismay a plaint of  
life and death our co-**F**ounders two notes enshrine us  
a vision we sound today **F**or the absence of one tone as  
one man has left but we min**D**, with Orpheus, the care-  
fully sheltered memory of his vo**I**ce and intellect of loving  
care, his hands-on life a true captai**N**ship we call on and hail  
to celebrate your crossing he was an Orpheu**S** on the road  
calm, funny, with the sweetest hu**M**an tenor voice, beloved  
by & loving his choral community, **O**rpheus, you left us in  
the city of the Angels, c’est la vie, c**R**ossing over, c’est la mort —  
yes, you led us here, we will go on as w**E** sing you now.

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## A JEFF QUARTET FOR 4 VOICES

*a 21st-century Elisabethan madrigal, based on a Lutheran chorale*

by Bo Holten (b.1948)

setting a poem by Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

We chose Bo as our “season featured composer” – a kind of experiment



in exploring the work of a given composer, early in the history of The Crossing when we were figuring out who we are and how we work. We sang four of Bo's works in the 2008-2009 season and he visited us from Denmark for The Month of Moderns 2009.

When to her lute Corinna sings,  
Her voice revives the leaden strings,  
And doth in highest notes appear  
As any challenged echo clear;  
But when she doth of mourning speak,  
Ev'n with her sighs the strings do break.

And as her lute doth live or die,  
Let by her passion, so must I:  
For when of pleasure she doth sing,  
My thoughts enjoy a sudden spring,  
But if she doth of sorrow speak,  
Ev'n from my heart the strings do break.

## THOUSAND WAVES

by Santa Ratniece (b.1977)

setting a poem from *The Divan* (1140:1-4) by Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (1207-1273), translated by Fatemeh Keshavarz

In 2013 we presented U.S. premieres of three of Santa's major vocal works during The Month of Moderns; Jeff arranged to bring Santa from Latvia for two of three concerts. At the time of Jeff's passing we knew we would have our own new work from Santa for *Seven Responses*, premiered two weeks ago, here in Philadelphia.

I arrived once again, like the spring breeze;  
I rose like the sun visible to all.  
I am the Sun in mid-summer, contrary to the old season;  
I have brought liveliness and joy to gardens.  
A thousand ring doves are searching for me in their songs.  
A thousand nightingales and parrots are flying in my direction.  
The news of my arrival reached the fish in the sea;  
The ferment of the sea created a thousand waves.

## TRANSLATION

by Ēriks Ešenvalds (b.1977)

setting a poem by Paulann Petersen (b.1942)

Jeff loved Ēriks' music and was instrumental in bringing him here to play piano in the world premiere of his *Seneca's Zodiac*, written for *Seneca Sounds* for The Month of Moderns 2011. Jeff sang in the many works of Ēriks we've programmed over the years: *Stars*, *Northern Lights*, *O salutaris*, *Sun Dogs*, *The Legend of the Walled-in Woman*, and the U.S. premiere of *The Long Road*.

Empty of words, not empty  
of light, the moon's face  
awaits the touch of a pen.

Empty of ink, but not  
of silver, that pale  
slate that is the moon

waits for a sweep  
of letters inscribed  
in strokes deep as dark

in which it floats.  
Emptied of nothing,  
filled with story, the moon becomes

a thin wafer melting  
in the mouth, words  
having found their tongue.

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## MAKE PEACE

by David Lang (b.1957)

after the Mourner's Kaddish

Few composers have had a longer or more intimate relationship with us than David, and Jeff was integral in producing David's *Statement to the Court*, which we commissioned and premiered as part of *The Levine*

*Project* for The Month of Moderns 2010. David's works for women are featured prominently on *I want to live*, which is named for one of his works; his Pulitzer-winning *The Little Match Girl Passion* has become a signature work for our ensemble.

If you can make peace  
make peace  
in the heavens  
in us  
in all the world

## SUMPTUOUS PLANET

by David Shapiro (b.1969)

setting an excerpt from *Unweaving the rainbow: science, delusion and the appetite for wonder* by Richard Dawkins (b.1941)

It feels as if David has been a kind of resident composer for The Crossing all along; his *It is Time* is the title track of our first CD in 2010, for which he also composed *The Years from You to Me* (on a Celan translation by his wife Ulrike). David composed *Et incarnatus est* for Christmas 2007 and his *A Century of Aprils* featured in our Month of Moderns 2015. He knew Jeff well and knew that this text would be a gift to all those that knew him intimately.

After sleeping through a hundred million centuries we have finally opened our eyes on a sumptuous planet, sparkling with color, bountiful with life. Within decades we must close our eyes again.

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## DEAR WORLD

by Lansing D. McLoskey (b.1964)

setting a poem by Poul Borum (1934-1996)

Lansing's *The Memory of Rain*, written for The Crossing and organist Scott Dettra, was premiered at *The Levine Project* 2010. That began a relationship with the composer that will produce a new concert-length work in Spring 2017 addressing issues Jeff cared about greatly: *Zealot Canticles*, on writings of Wole Soyinka.

Dear world!  
...but no one helps here, dear world.  
Each must stand firm in this useless decay.

there is a forest which isn't a forest  
just a collection of trees,  
they call them "The Trees of the Lonely."

dear world!  
there was so much I should have told you.

"Kære Verden" (©1970, Poul Borum).

*Published in på denne side, Gyldendal: Copenhagen, Denmark, 1970.*

*English translation by Lansing D. McLoskey, with assistance from Peter Borum.*

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## EMPIRE OF CRYSTAL

by Benjamin C.S. Boyle (b.1979)

setting an excerpt from *Invisible Cities* (Chapter 4) by Italo Calvino (1923-1985), translated by William Weaver

*[bracketed text omitted by the composer]*

Since their days singing together at St. Mark's Church, Benjamin, Jeff, and Rebecca remained close, with Benjamin writing a number of works for us over the years. Benjamin wrote the first commissioned work sung by The Crossing at our first concert in November 2005; he also composed the motet sung at Jeff's memorial service. For Month of Moderns 2010 we sang his cantata *To One in Paradise*. One of his *Three Carols for Wintertide* was written for The Crossing @ Christmas in 2007.

"And yet I know," [he would say], "that my empire is made of the stuff of crystals, [its molecules arranged in a perfect pattern]. Amid the surge of the elements, a splendid hard diamond takes shape, an immense, faceted, transparent mountain. Why do your [travel] impressions stop at disappointing appearances, [never catching this implacable process]? Why do you linger over inessential melancholies? Why do you hide from the emperor the grandeur of his destiny?"

## THE BEAUTIFUL LAND OF NOD

by Robert Convery (b.1954)

setting a poem by Ella Wheeler Wilcox (1850-1919)

*[bracketed text omitted by the composer]*

Bob has been a friend since our Spoleto days, when, first The Westminster Choir, and later The Bridge Ensemble – an earlier incarnation of The Crossing – were resident choirs there. Jeff sang in both, and in the world premiere of Bob's *Christmas Daybreak* in Philadelphia in 1997. That beautiful work became the title track of The Crossing's Christmas CD in 2013; we have sung it many times since.

Come, cuddle your head on my shoulder, dear,  
Your head like the golden rod,  
And we will go sailing away from here  
To the beautiful Land of Nod;  
Away from life's hurry, and flurry, and worry,  
Away from earth's shadows and gloom,  
To a world of fair weather, we'll float off together  
Where roses are always in bloom.

Come, close your eyes, and fold your hands,  
Your hands like the leaves of a rose,  
And we will go sailing to those fair lands  
That never an atlas shows:  
[On the north and the west they are bounded by rest,  
On the south and the east by dreams;  
'Tis the country ideal, where nothing is real,  
But everything only seems.

Just drop down the curtains of your dear eyes,  
Those eyes like a bright blue bell,  
And we will sail out, under star-lit skies,  
To the land where the fairies dwell.]

Down the river of sleep, our boat will sweep,  
'Till it reaches that mystical Isle  
Which no man has seen, but where all have been,  
And there we will pause awhile.  
I will croon you a song, as we float along,  
To that shore that is blessed of God.

Then ho! for that fair land; we're off for that rare land,  
That beautiful land of Nod.

## GENTLE SOUL, FIND PEACE

by Lewis Spratlan (b.1940)

setting a single phrase

Jeff sang the solo movement, "Paradox," on words of Richard Feynman, in Lew's major work *Vespers Cantata: Hesperus is Phosphorus* for The Month of Moderns 2012. That movement brought together many elements of his life: the musings of an admired physicist, humor, irony, and the music of Dan's father. At the time of Jeff's passing, Lew had agreed to write another big work for The Crossing's *Seven Responses*.

Gentle soul, find peace.

## YES, I AM YOUR ANGEL

By Gabriel Jackson (b.1962)

setting a poem by Kārlis Vērdiņš (b.1979), translated by Ieva Lešinska

Gabriel composed the first work The Crossing sang in our first performance in November 2005; Jeff worked to commission two major works from Gabriel – *According to Seneca* for *Seneca Sounds* 2011 and *Rigwreck* for *The Gulf (between you and me)* 2013; Gabriel attended both and has become a close friend of The Crossing.

## ANGEL

*"Are you my angel?" Allen Ginsberg.*

*A Supermarket in California*

Yes, I am your angel, driven out of heaven tonight to wrap a  
weary shrivelled apple for you, an apple passed so many times  
from one pair of greedy hands to another. Sale tonight:  
fresh fruit at a discount, dead flesh by installment.

Don't tell anyone, I am your angel, David shaped by  
Michelangelo; if my hands were kissed tonight, their  
porcelain knuckles would tinkle: "Your sky is the colour  
of eyes," you'd wheeze, ever the poet.

I wonder how much you'd get selling my parts at the flea  
market? Wincing from a bottle of gin mixed with black-currant  
jam, drunk  
in a dimly-lit room full of dead bodies, and shared with a stranger  
picked up at a bar; he'd babble boozily about tanks, and upon  
leaving he'd snatch your wallet.

An angel behind every counter tonight, aren't their smiles broader  
than the contract requires; the shift is over, in a flutter of  
wings they take off to their half-empty rooms: a naked  
bulb, a stove in the corner, cool cradling hands, a kiss on  
that sweet, curly-haired head.

The gent behind you is busy counting his money. He'll buy all  
the plums and bananas, he'll buy the supermarket perhaps,  
and I'll be included; he'll set me on a shelf behind glass,  
dust me off with a horsehair brush, polish heaven with a  
strip of plush.

Stop shouting, stop bragging. Quick, take the cucumbers out of  
your pockets, ask to be taken home; don't fret, write  
a poem.

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## WHAT IT MIGHT SAY

by Ted Hearne (b.1982)

setting an excerpt from "Communication between infant and mother,  
and mother and infant, compared and contrasted" (1968) by D.W.  
Winnicott (1896-1971), adapted by the composer

Ted was coming into focus at The Crossing in 2012 when we presented  
his work in a pre-election concert; the success of *Privilege* inspired us  
to commission a major work addressing political topics dear to Jeff's  
heart and intellect. The result, *Sound from the Bench*, was premiered at

The Month of Moderns 2014 and will be recorded this September.

So in the end we can come down to the fact that the baby communicates creatively and in time becomes able to use what is found. For most people the ultimate compliment is to be found and used, and I suppose therefore that these words could represent the communication of the baby with the mother.

I find you;  
You survive what I do to you as I come to  
                  recognize you as not-me;  
I use you;  
I forget you;  
But you remember me;  
I keep forgetting you;  
I lose you;  
I am sad.



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## Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the generosity and creativity of our artists and the composers who create for them; our board and staff for supporting our vision; and our audience for being so curious that they have created The Crossing.

For development assistance, Ruth Capolino, Charles and Terri Gearhart, and Grace Karschner

For providing our home, The Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill; Rev. Cindy Jarvis, Minister; Daniel Spratlan, Director of Music; Jo Ann West, Church Administrator; Ken Lovett, Associate Director of Music; and the entire staff and congregation

For housing our artists, Karen & Bob Richter, Colin Dill, Rebecca Thornburgh, Jeff & Liz Podraza, Sue Hansen, Rebecca Bernstein, Corbin Abernathy, Bill & Mary Hangley, Viorel & Micaela Farcas, Ron & Sheila Reese, Cindy Jarvis, Rebecca Siler, Jonathan Blumenfeld, Deborah Curtiss, Laura Ward and David Newmann

For providing the prosecco for this evening's toast, Jack Galgon

**...we thank you.**

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Lon Sullivan & Heather Hahn Sullivan

Elisa Sutherland

David Svahn

*In Honor of Thomas Lloyd*

Mark & Rebecca Tarallo

Kathy Taylor & Jon Sprogell

*In Memory of Jack Nally*

Craig & Marilyn Trueblood

Matthew & Mitchell Van de Water

*In Memory of Hank Van de Water*



Liz & Scott Vanderburg

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Linda Weaver

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Gerald Kaufman & Shelly Yanoff

*In Honor of Mary Hangley*

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## **AN AFTERNOON IN CHESTNUT HILL**

*We thank the following for season support:*

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Ms. Nancy Tompkins  
Chris Van de Velde & Lee Cooper  
Beth Van de Water  
Carol Westfall  
James & Elizabeth White  
Tom Woodward

## **What's up next**

### **Tomorrow!**

#### **10TH ANNIVERSARY Y'ALL COME END OF SEASON PARTY**

Saturday July 9, 4-6pm

Everyone is invited to the big party celebrating Jeff Quartets and our entire season in Chestnut Hill at the home Mike Mann (8711 Seminole St., Philadelphia 19118)

### **Come. Party. Now.**

#### ***Seven Responsees @ Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart***

Sunday, August 21; Part 1 at 3pm and Part 2 at 7pm

Merkin Hall at Kaufman Music Center, NYC

with International Contemporary Ensemble and Quicksilver.

We reprise *Seven Responses*: Dietrich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri*, with responses from Pelle Gudmundson-Holmgreem, David T. Little, Santa Ratniece, Caroline Shaw, Lewis Spratlan, Hans Thomalla, Anna Thorvaldsdottir

#### **The Crossing @ The Fringe**

Sunday, September 11 at 5pm @ FringeArts

*Sound from the Bench: political appropriations by Ted Hearne*

an all-Hearne program, including *Privilege*, *Consent*, *Ripple*, and *Sound from the Bench*



THE  
CROSSING

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