

Art Song Festival begins on May 21 at the Cleveland Institute of Music

by Daniel Hathaway



The every-other-year Art Song Festival at the Cleveland Institute of Music will bring two distinguished guest singers, their collaborative pianists, and ten singer-pianist teams to town from May 21-26 to explore one of the most intimate art forms in the chamber music genre.

The Festival was founded at CIM by George Vassos in 1985, who taught at the Institute for 50 years and remains the festival's founding artistic director. After

moving to Baldwin Wallace University for a decade, the Festival returned to CIM in 2017.

Over the years, the Art Song Festival has invited some of the world's most notable singers to be guest artists. This year's guests are tenor Christoph Prégardien (above), pianist Roger Vignoles, soprano Ana Maria Martinez (below), and pianist Craig Terry, who will give master classes throughout the week as well as solo recitals.

“George Vassos takes great pride in seeking artists to bring to Cleveland,” festival executive director Dean Southern said in a telephone conversation. “Sometimes they are undiscovered stars he sees something in — like Edwin Crossley-Mercer two years ago — but quite often they are established, like both of the singers we have with us this year, who are in the middle of long, successful careers. Christoph is very much a recitalist, one of the few who truly specializes in art song recitals. And Ana Maria is a major opera singer who grew up in Puerto Rico, so Spanish is her native language. She’ll bring authenticity to the Spanish repertoire, which is a unique opportunity for us.”



On Thursday, May 24, Prégardien and Vignoles will perform Schubert's cycle, *Die schöne Müllerin*. The following evening, Friday, May 25, Martinez will join Terry in Spanish and Latin American songs by de Falla, Rodrigo, Turina, and others. Both events begin at 8:00 pm in Mixon Hall. Tickets are available [online](#).

Master classes by all four guest artists during the week will culminate in a recital by teams of singers and pianists on Saturday, May 26 at 7:30 pm in Mixon Hall. That concert is free. The participants include

David Tayloe, tenor, and Christopher Reed, piano
Nayoung Yeo, soprano, and, Ying Ho Joanna Huang, piano
Ellen McAteer, soprano, and Geoffrey Conquer, pianod
Coraine Tate, soprano, and Peyson Moss, piano
Lucy Fitz Gibbon, soprano, and Ryan McCullough, piano
Benjamin Liu, tenor, and Taylor Flowers, piano
Bryant Bush, bass, and Melivia Raharjo, piano
Merav Eldan, mezzo-soprano, and Adam Whiting, piano
Caroline Bergan, soprano, and Diana Borshcheva, piano
Matthew Brennan, baritone, and Melivia Raharjo, piano

“Twenty-seven teams applied through our extensive application process,” Southern said, “out of which we selected ten.”

In addition to the master classes in CIM's Kulas Hall, which are free and open to the public, a special, free lecture on Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* will be given by art song authority Susan Youens of the University of Notre Dame on Thursday, May 24 at 3:00 pm. See the festival schedule [here](#).

Between the full festival years, the Art Song Festival keeps the art song buzz going by offering a recital by a distinguished artist. Save the date of Friday, January 18,

2019, when baritone Benjamin Appl and pianist James Baillieu will perform songs by Schubert, Duparc, and Grieg, Schumann's cycle *Dichterliebe*, and Nico Muhly's *The Last Letter* (2015) in CIM's Mixon Hall.

I asked Dean Southern what an audience member new to the world of Art Song might expect if they choose to dip a toe into this artform? "People should come expecting to be moved and challenged," he said. "All the repertoire is in foreign languages, with printed translations provided. It requires some investment to read and follow along, but it keeps people engaged. First timers will be taken by the intimacy of this kind of art. It's not big and theatrical like opera or musical theater. It relies much more on the power of the text through high quality poetry and beautiful music performed solely by a singer and a pianist. That opens up an enormous range of imaginative ideas that can be quite different from one audience member to another."

Published on ClevelandClassical.com May 15, 2018.

Click here for a printable copy of this article

[Return to the Front Page.](#)