

### Next up on Chamber Music Society series: baritone Quinn Kelsey & pianist Craig Ketter



*Bright is the ring of words  
When the right man rings them,  
Fair the fall of songs  
When the singer sings them,  
Still they are caroled and said—  
On wings they are carried—  
After the singer is dead  
And the maker buried.*  
— R.L. Stevenson.

One time-honored classical music tradition — the solo voice recital — has nearly

disappeared from Northeast Ohio's concert calendar ever since the Cleveland Art Song Festival ceased operations.

Happily, that intimate art form that weaves words and music into new lyrical creations will be revived on Tuesday, February 3 at 7:30 at Disciples Church in Cleveland Heights, when the Cleveland Chamber Music Society presents Hawaiian-born baritone Quinn Kelsey and pianist Craig Ketter in recital.

Best known for his dramatic interpretation of operatic roles, Kelsey has become a go-to Verdi baritone over his decade at the Metropolitan Opera, winning high critical marks for his performances there as well as in major houses throughout the world.

But on Tuesday, rather than plumbing the depths of an opera character, Kelsey will treat the audience at Disciples to groups of English language songs set or arranged by three well-known composers with unique musical voices — plus settings of the poetry of Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes by three not-so-well-known songsmiths.

Works from that first trio of composers are immediately identifiable for their individual style: Aaron Copland for his lean “American-sounding” musical

rhetoric, Gerald Finzi for his unique take on English Romanticism, and Ralph Vaughan Williams for his lifelong appropriation of English folk music.

The 7:30 pm program begins with selections from Copland's *Old American Songs*, ("The Boatmen's Dance," "The Dodger," "Simple Gifts," and "Long Time Ago").

Finzi's Shakespeare suite *Let Us Garlands Bring* includes "Come away, death" from *Twelfth Night*, "Who is Silvia" from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" from *Cymbeline*, "O mistress mine" from *Twelfth Night*, and "It was a lover and his lass" from *As You Like It*). Click [here](#) to watch Quinn Kelsey perform "It was a lover" at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Vaughan Williams' eleven settings of poems by Robert Louis Stevenson gathered under the title *Songs of Travel* ends the program with what could be regarded as an English response to Schubert's *Winterreise*.

At the center of the evening's program, Kelsey will feature settings of poetry by Langston Hughes by Florence Price ("Songs to the Dark Virgin" & "My Dream" from *Four Songs from The Weary Blues*), by Margaret Bonds (*Three Dream Portraits*), and by John Alden Carpenter "Shake your brown feet, honey," "The cryin' blues," and "Jazz boys" from *Four Negro Songs*.

The happy conjunction of singer, pianist, words, and music in this program promises an enjoyable and memorable experience that just might inspire other presenting organizations to revive a once-popular concert format.

Emily Laurence will share more insights into the music in a pre-concert talk at 6:30,

*Published on ClevelandClassical.com January 29, 2026.*

*Click [here](#) for a printable copy of this article*

[Return to the Front Page.](#)