

13 | THE THIRTEEN

THE OUTER EDGE OF YOUTH VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When Scott and I began discussing this chamber opera in 2017, I was immediately drawn not only to his compositional voice but to the themes he wanted to explore: love of the natural world and how men and boys relate to each other and the world around them. The resulting work is beautiful and vulnerable; I am heartbroken that the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated that we reschedule its World Premiere performances. I look forward to sharing it in its entirety with you during the 2021-22 season. Yet, I am pleased that we are able to share an excerpt of this work recorded in our musicians' homes throughout the United States.

I'm overwhelmed with gratitude toward Scott, who has spent a year of his life writing this masterpiece. I'm thankful for our musicians, who, in a time of great uncertainty have found the will to be artistically present. And to Alexander Brusencev who so beautifully edited this socially-distanced performance. I'm thankful for Cheryl Naulty & Walter Hill, *The Outer Edge of Youth's* concert sponsors, and to Penny Clark and Charles Cerf & Cindy Dunbar, The Thirteen's 2019-2020 season sponsors. To you, our audience, I want to say thank you: not only have many of you donated the value of your tickets for *The Outer Edge of Youth* to The Thirteen, you sustain the art that we create and the artists with whom we work.

Until we see each other next, I wish you good health and cheerful hearts,

Matthew Robertson

PROGRAM

excerpt from **The Outer Edge of Youth**
Act I, Scene 3: Litany of the Birds

Scott Ordway (b. 1984)

The Thirteen is grateful for your generosity, and never more so than in navigating these unprecedented times. Please consider [giving now](#) to help us compensate our artists, support our upcoming 2020-2021 season, and sustain us through the next six months.

ROSTER

Molly Netter, *Sebastian*
Emily Marvosh, *Nicholas*

Katelyn Aungst, *soprano*
Steven Berlanga, *bass-baritone*
Julie Bosworth, *soprano*
William Doreza, *baritone*
Andrew Fuchs, *tenor*
Clifton Massey, *countertenor*
P. Lucy McVeigh, *mezzo-soprano*
Jacob Perry, *tenor*

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Gilbert Spencer, *Assistant Conductor*

COMPOSER'S NOTE

Inspired by the fable of St. Francis, *The Outer Edge of Youth* tells the story of two young boys who discover that they can understand the birds singing in the trees near their home. Guided by these unseen voices, the pair of friends wander deep into the forest where they discover a dreamlike world of plants and animals that changes them in radical and unforeseen ways.

The piece, which blends elements of opera, oratorio, and concert music, explores several interconnected themes. These include the ways in which boys and young men relate to each other and to the natural world around them, the overlap and occasional conflict between our aesthetic and our ethical commitments, and the role of compassion in contemporary life.

In this short excerpt from the end of Act 1, the birds hesitate, questioning their own wisdom and the decency of the game they are playing with the boys. In Act 2, they will press on, confident that by revealing more of the world to these children in the last hours of their youth, that they can lead them along a path of grace, much as St. Francis believed that even the smallest creatures could hear the faint whisper of the divine.

—Scott Ordway, April 2020

TEXT

from Act 1, Scene 3: Litany of the Birds

The Outer Edge of Youth

Text and Music by Scott Ordway

Are we mistaken?
Are we lost?
Are we forsaken?
Have we been reckless?
Do we miss the point?
Do we take a longer path?
Can we see the sky?
Can we feel the sunshine?
Can we know love?
Can we know perfection?
Are we lost?
Have we been reckless?
Do we fly in circles?
Do we long for love?
Can we know perfection?
Is there more than this?
Do we see the sky from here?

Do we ask a question?
Do we hear the water?
Is this a place of pleasure?
Do we long for comfort?
Do we know gratitude?
Do we fly in circles?
Have we been listening?
What does it mean to suffer?

Does it mean to know perfection?
Can we understand?
Can we believe in love?
Can we know love?
Does it mean to suffer?

What is gratitude?
Have we known love?
What is our long distraction?
Do we fly in circles?
What is our long distraction?
Is there not pain in sacrifice?
Do we not sing in summer?
Do we not soar out above the waves?
Do we know perfection?
Is there not grace in pleasure?
Can we not walk in peace?
Is there a home without comfort?
Is there not grace in weakness?
Is there no blessed failure?
Can we understand?
Are we alone as we wander?
Is there no tender land around us?
Is there no grace in pleasure?
Is there not pain in sacrifice?

Will they both despise us?

Do we fly in circles?