



Western Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

FRIDAYS AT 12:30 SERIES

Friday, January 23, 2026

12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall and [via livestream](#)

[Christine Tithecott](#), *piano*

[Bobbi Thompson](#), *saxophone*

Christopher Miller, *piano*

Paul Digout, *piano*

[Jana Starling](#), *clarinet*

Angela Gjurichanin, *soprano*

Hillary Tufford, *mezzo-soprano*

Thiago Soares, *tenor*

[Chad Louwerse](#), *baritone*

Waiting

Dorothy Chang
(b. 1970)

Bobbi Thompson, *saxophone*
Christine Tithecott, *piano*

Shy Life

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Christopher Miller
(b. 1977)

Christopher Miller, *piano*

Down and Dirty

I. *Freely*

II. *Almost Playful – Menacing*

III. *Impassioned*

V. *A Little More Down-and-Dirty*

Vivian Fung
(b. 1975)

Jana Starling, *clarinet*
Christine Tithecott, *piano*

All Around the Circle

John Greer
(b. 1954)

Paul Digout, *piano*
Christine Tithecott, *piano*
Angela Gjurichanin, *soprano*
Hillary Tufford, *mezzo-soprano*
Thiago Soares, *tenor*
Chad Louwerse, *baritone*

THE ARTISTS

Please visit the linked names in the personnel listing for Western faculty member biographies.

Vocal coach **Paul Digout** holds a Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano and a Bachelor of Musical Arts degree from Western University, where he studied with Dr. John Hess. Paul also holds an Associate Diploma in Piano Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music. Paul has been invited to participate in prestigious International Young Artist programmes including La Musica Lirica (Novafeltria, Italy) Opera NUOVA (Edmonton, AB) and the Canadian Operatic Arts Academy (London, Ontario). In demand as a collaborative pianist and répétiteur, Paul has worked across Canada, and Internationally with the Yorkshire Opera Workshop (Yorkshire, U.K.), Halifax Summer Opera Festival (Halifax, NS), Cowtown Opera Summer Academy (Calgary, AB), The Victoria Playhouse (Petrolia, Ontario), Music Theatre on the Thames (London, Ontario) and Opera NUOVA (Edmonton, AB) Grande Prairie Opera (Grande Prairie, AB). At present, Mr. Digout maintains a full schedule as a freelance collaborative pianist at Western, as well as co-founder of the Forest City Opera Pub.

Chris Miller earned his Bachelor of Music (Honours) in Composition in 2022 and his Master of Music in Composition in 2023 from Western. He is an active composer, private music educator, and currently serves as Music Director at Riverside United Church. Miller's compositional voice blends elements of minimalism, punk, and new wave, frequently incorporating synthesizers and electroacoustic textures. He began his musical career in Edmonton, performing semi-improvisational concerts in nightclubs—often transporting a grand piano between venues. Although his early training focused on piano performance, culminating in an ARCT in Piano Performance in 2005, composition has remained the central focus of his artistic practice. His works span concert music, film, and multimedia projects, including a claymation short film adaptation of *The Fall of the House of Usher*, *Highway 16* for piano quintet, and *Opposites – Allegro con Fuoco* for two pianos. Among his most notable projects is his work as composer for the horror/fantasy podcast *Dark Heights*, featuring prose by his brother, C. D. Miller, and a sound world combining piano, synthesizers, and drum machines. Miller currently resides in London, Ontario, where he continues to compose and regularly performs piano and electroacoustic concerts. He is also a member of the duo First Day of School with Matt Werm, former lead singer of Salmonblaster. The work programmed today, 'Shy Life,' is a project in collaboration with his brother C.D. Miller. It is a novel about the functions and dysfunctions of family with short piano pieces that accompany each chapter. The musical structure consists of 49 pieces, one in each key (twice), with one piece consisting of all the keys. The pieces follow the path of the circle of fifths and they are simple, minimalist piano works that can be heard or played, after, or while, reading each chapter of the novel.

Brazilian tenor **Thiago Soares** holds a Master's degree in Voice Performance at Georgia State University, and a B.M. in Voice Performance, at Universidade de São Paulo. First place prize winner in the first Bauru-Atlanta Competition, Mr. Soares made his debut as Paolino in *Il Matrimonio Segreto* at São Pedro Theater, and his engagements have included among others, Don Jose in *Carmen* (São Paulo and Belo Horizonte), Nemorino in *L'elisir d'amore* (São Paulo), Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (Atlanta and Belo Horizonte), Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* (Novafeltria and Bellaria / Italy), Candide in *Candide* (Henderson, USA) Nadir in *Pêcheurs de Perles* (Sao Paulo), Romeo in *Romeo et Juliette* (São Paulo), Il Conte d'Almaviva in *Il Barbieri di Siviglia* (São Paulo), Remendado in *Carmen* (Atlanta), Fernandez in Carlos Gomes' *Salvator Rosa* and *O Garatuja*, in the world-wide premiere of Ernst Mahle's *O Garatuja*. In 2008 sang the roles of Scaramuccio in *Ariadne auf Naxos* and Revolutionary Priest in America's premiere of Roger Water's *Ça Ira*, both at Amazonas Opera Festival. He also appeared with premier orchestras in works such as Bach's *St. Mathews Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Saint- Saën's *Oratorio de Noël*, and Schubert's *Mass in G*. Mr. Soares presented a recital of Brazilian art songs by Villa-Lobos at the Steinway Hall in New York and Boston. Among his last performances include the title role in *Albert Herring*, Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus* (both Western University opera productions), a voice recital at the Canadian Opera Company, and the role of Pinkerton in *Madama Butterfly* (Manizales, Colombia).

Praised for her “gentle and delicate tone” (NCOC), Macedonian-Canadian soprano **Angela Gjurichanin** brings warmth and expressive detail to both operatic and concert stages. This season, she makes her debut as soprano soloist in *Messiah* with Choral Connection and recently appeared as the Sandman/Dew Fairy in *Hansel and Gretel* with Grand River Opera and Adina (cover) in *L'elisir d'amore* with the North York Concert Orchestra. Other highlights include Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*, Nella in *Gianni Schicchi*, Adina in *L'elisir d'amore*, and Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro*. On the concert stage, Angela has appeared with the Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra in Bach's *St. John Passion*, the Stratford Concert Choir in Haydn's *Missa in tempore belli*, and the Milton Choristers and Regina Symphony Orchestra in Handel's *Messiah*. A First Place winner of the Gordon Wallis Opera Competition and District Winner in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, she holds degrees from Western University and the University of Saskatchewan.

Canadian mezzo soprano **Hillary Tufford** is a versatile and engaging performer, noted for a “rich and velvety sound,” that is “lush and suave throughout,” (Opera Canada). A 2017 Graduate of Western University, (Masters in Literature and Performance), Hillary was invited to join the Yulanda M. Faris Young Artist Program at Vancouver Opera where she “almost stole the show” in her debut as Lola in their performance of *Cavalleria Rusticana*. Last season, Hillary made her debut with The Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra in *Messiah*, as well as her Soundstreams debut in *The Garden of Vanished Pleasures*. Hillary also jumped-in for the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra, singing Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. This season Hillary returns to sing *Messiah* with Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra and makes her international debut as *Cherubino* at Daegu Opera, South Korea. In past seasons, Hillary performed with the Elmer Eisler Singers, Victoria Philharmonic Choir, Vancouver Bach Choir, Tapestry Opera, and the Kingston Symphony. Hillary was a District Winner in the Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, a Finalist for the Mozart Project Competition, and a semi-finalist for the Nuits Lyriques de Marmande. She has received grants from the Canadian Council for the Arts, The Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation, RBC Emerging Artist Project, and The Hazel Crydermann-Wees Foundation.

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