Robert Best
Vocal Studies / School of Music

Three Songs based on the Poetry of Rabinranath Tagore for Baritone and Piano

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was an extraordinarily influential force in Bengali culture, having been an accomplished poet, composer, playwright, among many other disciplines of study. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 for his "Gitanjali," a collection of some of his poetic works. Composers in the early Twentieth Century such as John Alden Carpenter, Richard Hundley, and Frank Bridge set Tagore's poetry to song but despite Tagore's widespread cultural influence across the globe, not many composers have set his poetry to music recently.

This proposal is intended to expand the musical settings of Tagore's poetry in the classical art song repertoire, and to commission Phillip Schroeder, a critically acclaimed composer to write three songs for baritone and piano for this purpose. The performances of this work would take place during the 2009-2010 Academic Year on collaborative recitals, whose entire programs will feature songs based on Tagore's poetry, with Dr. Aidan Soder, mezzo-soprano - University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance (UMKC) and Dr. Elvia Puccinelli, pianist - University of North Texas (UNT). These performances will take place at Baylor University, Rice University, UNT, UMKC, and perhaps University of Kansas and Indiana University (arrangements are still in process at those final two institutions).