



## JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Bloomington

*Four Hundred Sixty-Third Program of the 2023-24 Season*

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### *New Opera Workshop Series*

# *Swimming in the Dark*

A Concert Reading of Four  
Scenes from Act I

Music by Martin Hennessey

Libretto by Stephen Kitsakos

Adapted from the novel  
by Tomasz Jędrowski

Michael Shell, *Producer*

Tyler Readinger, *Conductor*

Mireia Frutos Fernández, *Coach Accompanist/  
Rehearsal Pianist*

*Martin Hennessey and Stephen Kitsakos are the recipients of the exclusive Musical Adaptation Rights for "Swimming in the Dark" by Tomasz Jędrowski through an arrangement with the author and the Blake Friedmann Agency, Ltd. U.K.*

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Auer Concert Hall  
Saturday Afternoon  
January Twentieth  
Two O'Clock

*Indiana University prohibits the unauthorized recording, publication, and streaming of live performances. Please silence all electronic devices.*

## Cast of Characters

Ludwik Głowacki . . . . .	Zachary Olmoz
Granny/Ensemble . . . . .	Geneil Perkins
Beata . . . . .	Veronica Siebert
Mother/Ensemble . . . . .	Kathiana Dargenson
Marian Zalewski . . . . .	Colin Anderson
Comrade Belka . . . . .	Will Upham
Karolina . . . . .	Jenna Kreider
Janusz . . . . .	David Drettwan
Maksio Karowski . . . . .	Theo Harrah
Hania Karowski/Ensemble . . . . .	Madelyn Deininger
Ensemble/Granny Cover . . . . .	Danielle Long
Ensemble/Belka Cover . . . . .	Mark Berkowitz
Ensemble/Mother Cover . . . . .	Brittany Weinstock
Narrator . . . . .	Steven Warnock

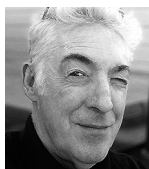


## Program Notes

These 45 minutes of excerpts are from scenes 1, 2, 3, and 5 of an two-act operatic work-in-progress. The opera, set in 1980s Poland, is a tender and passionate love story of two young men who meet one summer and bond over an illicit copy of James Baldwin’s seminal LGBTQ novel *Giovanni’s Room*. As the Communist Republic declines, they discover their political identities are at odds, and their love is tested. Filled with informers, opportunists, and those who dream of a life in the West, the story of Ludwik and Janusz evokes a nostalgia for a Poland that “could be” while bringing to life the struggles of two individuals trapped in a stultifying and corrupt bureaucratic state and the difficult decisions each makes to survive. What emerges is an exhilarating and powerful love affair haunted by Iron Curtain politics.

Jumping 45 years ahead, the poisonous fact is that *Swimming in the Dark* takes place in Poland, a nation where Polish president Andrzej Duda recently commented that “LGBT ideology is even more destructive than Communism” and where many regions of Poland have declared themselves LGBT-free zones in 2019. This has foreshadowed what is happening in many parts of the United States already hostile to LGBTQ Americans.

## Biographies



**Martin Hennessy** is a prolific composer of chamber opera and art song. His opera *A Letter to East 11<sup>th</sup> Street*, with a libretto by Mark Campbell, was the first winner of the Domenic J. Pellicciotti Opera Composition Prize in 2014. Other chamber works include *The Young King*, with a libretto by Tom Rowan, commissioned by the University of Maryland; and *The Good Friar*, with a libretto by Mark Campbell, for the Center for Contemporary Opera and Urban Arias. With librettist Stephen Kitsakos, Hennessy composed *An Incident in Sutton Square* (finalist for the 2023 Dominic Argento Chamber Opera Prize), *The Woman in Penthouse A*, and *The Pleasing Recollection: A Cabaret Opera*. His *Ben Jonson Songs* won grand prize at the San Francisco Song Festival, and he has been honored with Copland House and Millay Colony residencies as well as commissions from the Estate Project for Artists with AIDS and the Sorel Foundation.



**Stephen Kitsakos** is an opera librettist, theatre director and educator. Writing commissions include the NEA, the American Opera Project, NYSCA, and the Episcopal Diocese of NY. With composer Sheila Silver he wrote the libretto for *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, based on the bestselling book by Khaled Hosseini (Seattle Opera) a nominee for Best New Opera 2023 International Opera Awards, the chamber opera *The Wooden Sword*, and the Tibetan-themed operatic cantata *The White Rooster*, commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution. With composer Martin Hennessy he wrote the libretti for the one-act opera theater monologues *An Incident in Sutton Square*, finalist for the 2023 Dominic Argento Chamber Opera Award, *The Woman in Penthouse A* and *The Pleasing Recollection*. A member of the Theatre Arts Faculty at SUNY New Paltz for fifteen years, Kitsakos was a contributing writer at *The Sondheim Review* as well as *Music in American Life* for ABC-CLIO.

## Orchestra

Lilah Senibaldi, *Flute/Piccolo*  
Abby Bracken, *Oboe*  
Adam Blayney, *Clarinet*  
Nathan Centa, *Bassoon*  
Elizabeth Cooksey, *Horn*  
Mireia Frutos Fernández, *Piano*  
Thomas Frost, *Percussion*  
Xinyuan Wang, *Violin*  
K. Lee Morris, *Violin*  
Wan-Zhen Xie, *Viola*  
Henry Lin, *Cello*  
Devin Ascioti, *Double Bass*

## Acknowledgments

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# An American Dream

*J. Perla & J. M. Moo*

 JACOBS SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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