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## Recital Series

# Florestan Recital Project



Alison d'Amato & Aaron Engebret, Artistic Co-Directors

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Complete artist information including video, audio and interviews are available at [www.pricerubin.com](http://www.pricerubin.com)

## Florestan Recital Project – Biography

Florestan was born in 2001, when Aaron and tenor Joe Dan Harper brainstormed about a song series during a long opera rehearsal. They shared a love for song, a desire to actually use university training for its intended purpose, and Aaron's vague panic about ending up working a fluorescent-bulb-lit office job for the next fifty years. Those hurried beginnings have given way to a near fifteen-year history of performance, innovation, recording, and mentorship.

We are named for the fiery character of Florestan, one of the creative alter egos of composer Robert Schumann, who wrote of a basic mission: "to be remindful of older times and their works and to emphasize that only from such a pure source can new artistic beauties be fostered." That message is at the center of our activities, generating projects that draw connections between art song of the past, present, and future, while exploring the genre's rich collaborative possibilities.

Aaron and Joe Dan joined with pianist Anne Kissel as Florestan's co-founders and artistic directors. When Joe Dan and Anne embarked on a Fulbright grant to Germany in 2003, Alison d'Amato came on as a co-director to further develop the Boston-based concert series. As lives and employment opportunities took off in several directions, Florestan has evolved into a multi-faceted organization with an international network of collaborators, co-directed by Aaron and Alison since 2012.

Since these Boston-based beginnings, Florestan has grown into a national art song powerhouse, producing recitals, festivals, and innovative performances of classical music for audiences from coast to coast. Our repertoire includes large-city premieres of new work as well as revivals of older pieces. Mentoring is also an essential part of Florestan's mission, and we have led and participated in several efforts to foster the development of young performers and composers, from short-term residencies to emerging artist programs.

In 2008, Florestan Records was launched, initiating a critically-acclaimed catalog of world premiere art song recordings. In 2012, Florestan augmented our

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## Florestan Recital Project – Biography

website and marketing approaches specifically to accommodate ongoing recording projects, many of which will be released for free through streaming web audio. We believe these works should have no monetary impediment to being heard, and that the gift of live performance gains value the more music is shared.

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## Florestan Recital Project – Review Excerpts

From a review of a performance of Schumann's Dichterliebe

*"The performance was, quite simply, breathtaking...In fact, it would have been difficult to imagine applause; the ballet held the audience rapt. When the curtain was drawn, there seemed to be a collective intake of breath, followed by a roaring standing ovation."*

-Portland Press Herald

*"I don't remember a 'concert' where people were as engaged, or had as much fun; but, of course, this event was much more than a concert. Wordsong wisely used the terrific baritone Aaron Engebret and fearless pianist Alison d'Amato, co-directors of the Florestan Recital Project, that champions song recitals. Together they gave beautiful, haunting, fun performances."*

-Boston Musical Intelligencer From a review of a performance of 'WordSong'

For The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson for Voice and Piano:

*"This set is as important to the history of American Art song as the Barber recordings of Cheryl Studer and Thomas Hampson two decades ago. All four singers major in clarity of diction and fluidity of phrasing. Pianists provide impeccably prepared and executed support in Thomson's frequently tricky accompaniments, and respond acutely to his mix of down-home, Kansas City folksiness and Parisian sophistication. Five Star Recording and Choral and Song pick of the month."*

-BBC Music Magazine

*"Every so often a recording comes along that represents not only high artistic achievement but also a landmark contribution to musical culture. The new collection from the Florestan Recital Project for the New World label is one: a 3-CD set of the complete songs for voice and piano by American composer Virgil Thomson. Rather than organize this encyclopedic project chronologically, the Florestan protagonists — baritone Aaron Engebret and pianist Alison D'Amato — mingle songs from different styles and eras, perhaps as a way of emphasizing the fluidity of the composer's evolution. The composer's melodic ingenuity and*

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## Florestan Recital Project – Review Excerpts

*paramount concern with clear prosody shine through every moment of this revealing set, thanks to the efforts of Engebret and D'Amato and their colleagues (soprano Sarah Pelletier, alto Lynne McMurtry, tenor William Hite, pianist Linda Osborn, and, in a brief appearance, percussionist John McDonald). Complete texts and an insightful essay from Boston University's Rodney Lister make this collection something to return to often — perhaps in the company of the Library of America's collections of Thomson's music writings, the second of which is due in August."*

-The Boston Globe

*"Why have I been discussing the works rather than the performances? Because all four singers are so accomplished, so precise, so free of artifice, and so intent on doing right by Thomson and making the words clear that you hear the compositions first, the interpretations second. I suspect that's what Thomson would have wanted. Indeed, the diction is so uniformly excellent that New World could have spared providing complete texts, although I'm glad they didn't! The pianists adhere faithfully to Thomson's markings and eschew the expressive "hairpins" and phrase taperings that caused the composer to yell at more than a few well-meaning accompanists. Rated 10 out of 10."*

-Classics Today

*"You can hear the weird, the wild and the wonderful in these songs.....There is great variety, and these very fine performances make about as good a case for them as imaginable."*

-American Record Guide

*"This is a major release, a gift that fills in a serious gap of recorded American music history."*

-Fanfare Magazine

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## Florestan Recital Project – Review Excerpts

*The Florestan Recital thrived perhaps not by the success of the performances themselves but by the manner in which they were displayed to the audience. In an industry full of recitals and concerts that require audience members to simply sit back and enjoy the show on stage, the Florestan Project invites and even encourages spectators to become actively involved in the performance. The recital proved that innovation is not created through the medium itself but rather through those artists willing to demonstrate ingenuity.*

-The Leader for Performances in Fredonia, NY

*“This cycle [by Ruth Crawford-Seeger], as well as the final, extraordinarily interesting work – The Peculiar Case of Dr. Holmes by Libby Larsen – were performed by the brilliant baritone Aaron Engebretth with pianist Alison d’Amato. Both are wonderful musicians, dedicated to solo instrumental performance, and founders of organizations that promote this art. Engebretth “acts out” the miniature musical form with artistry and musicality.”*

-Kultura weekly • issue 37 (2655) (Nov. 4, 2011)

From a review of the 2011 AmBul Festival by Natalia Ilieva, Sofia, Bulgaria

*“The performances, by Florestan artistic directors Aaron Engebretth (baritone) and Alison d’Amato (piano) are first-rate—stylish, lived-in interpretations with high technical polish. (The former vocal coach part of me could listen to Engebretth’s diction all day long.)”*

-A review of "The Early Songs of Samuel Barber" recordings, by Matthew Guerrieri, NewMusicBox, November 2013

*Aaron Engebretth sings with a bright, beautifully focused tone. He has a lovely high extension and an ability to deliver the text clearly and effectively. The cycle demands rich low register singing only in two lines of the last song. This Engebretth handles without difficulty. Alison d’Amato displays a wonderful range of energy and sensitivity in her playing that makes the matter-of-fact nature of the text chilling. Both artists are remarkably accurate in their reading of the*

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## Florestan Recital Project – Review Excerpts

*score and provide a sense through artistic expression of how horribly inhuman we humans can be. Coordination between the video animation and the music is excellent and the entire production is strikingly engrossing. You may find this work troubling. It is, however, certainly absorbing and thought provoking.*

-A review of our "Peculiar Case of Dr. H. H. Holmes" recording WITH video, by Dr. Holst, Sparks & Wirey Cries, December 2012

*"Florestan's performances give due credit and more, with beautiful diction and assured interpretation."*

-National Public Radio 5 Best American Contemporary Classical Albums Of 2010; a review of Florestan's recording, The Complete Songs of Daniel Pinkham by Daniel Gilliam

*"... presentation is exemplary from all angles. Enthusiastically recommended."*

-Fanfare Magazine

CD Review: The Complete Songs of Daniel Pinkham, volumes 1 and 2 by Colin Clarke

*"The Florestan Recital Project has performed all 152 Poulenc songs over the last three years, and then it scheduled them again for a four-concert festival last weekend. This has been done once before in this country, in Minneapolis, but there can't be too many other cities where anyone would program an undertaking this ambitious and carry it off with this panache."*

-FrancisFest, the Complete Songs of Francis Poulenc by Richard Dyer, Boston Globe

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# Florestan Recital Project – Selected Audio Sample

## Artist Information

### Early Songs of Samuel Barber



World Premiere Recordings Performed by:

Aaron Engebret, baritone

Alison d'Amato, pianist

1. Lady, When I Behold the Roses

Words by John Wilbye (1574-1638)

2. An Earnest Suit to His Unkind Mistress Not to Forsake Him; Words by Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542)

3. Hey Nonny No!

Words from Christ Church Manuscript

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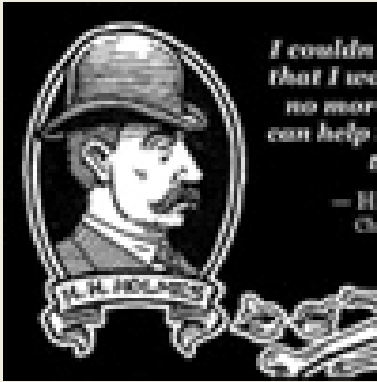
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## The Peculiar Case of Dr. H.H. Holmes



by Libby Larsen

World Premiere Recordings Performed by:

Aaron Engebret, baritone

Alison d'Amato, pianist

Individual Movements I - V:

6. I State My Case

7. As A Young Man

8. I Build My Business

9. Thirteen Ladies and Three Who Got Away (Grand Waltz Macabre)

10. Evidence

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## Early Songs of Samuel Barber



World Premiere Recordings Performed by:

Aaron Engebret, baritone

Alison d'Amato, pianist

11. Fantasy In Purple, Words by Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

12. Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, Words by Robert Frost (1874-1963)

13. Watchers, Words attributed to Dean Cornwell (1892-1960)

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## Florestan Recital Project – Selected Audio Sample Artist Information

From The Complete Songs of Daniel Pinkham,  
volumes I & II



### World Premiere Recordings

14. Stars, I Have Seen Them Fall, Words by A. E. Housman (1859-1936)

Performed by Joe Dan Harper, tenor & Anne Kissel, pianist

15. Some, Too Fragile For Winter Winds, Words by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Performed by Aaron Engebret, baritone & Alison d'Amato, pianist

16. Magnificat

Performed by Joe Dan Harper, tenor & Heinrich Christensen, organist

17. Author of Light

Performed by Aaron Engebret, baritone & Heinrich Christensen, organist

18. Let God Arise!

Performed by Aaron Engebret, baritone & Heinrich Christensen, organist

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## Wordsong and Florestan Recital Project

[www.wordsongboston.org](http://www.wordsongboston.org)

[www.florestanproject.org](http://www.florestanproject.org)

**WordSong** is a new concert format in which one text is presented in multiple, newly composed settings and is the focus of directed conversation among composers, performers, and audiences.

In these programs, four musical settings of “Harlem” (Langston Hughes) OR “Disillusionment at Ten O’Clock” (Wallace Stevens) are heard and discussed in this new, highly interactive concert format.

WordSong’s goal is to reconnect musicians and listeners through shared, active artistic experiences. It is a public conversation about intuitive musical understanding.

### **Wordsong II: settings of Langston Hughes’s *Harlem***

Andy Vores  
Tom Schnauber  
Dalit Hadass Warshaw  
Howard Frazin

#### **Harlem**

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up  
like a raisin in the sun?  
Or fester like a sore—  
And then run?  
Does it stink like rotten meat?  
Or crust and sugar over—  
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags  
like a heavy load.

*Or does it explode?*

--Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

### **Wordsong V: Settings of Wallace Stevens’ “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock”**

Tom Schnauber  
Felicia Sandler  
Howard Frazin  
Nick Vines

#### **Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock**

The houses are haunted  
By white night-gowns.  
None are green,  
Or purple with green rings,  
Or green with yellow rings,  
Or yellow with blue rings.  
None of them are strange,  
With socks of lace  
And beaded ceintures.  
People are not going  
To dream of baboons and periwinkles.  
Only, here and there, an old sailor,  
Drunk and asleep in his boots,  
Catches tigers  
In red weather.

Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

#### ***Wordsong Forum II performances:***

5/2/2009, Monadnock Music Festival, NH  
5/17/2009, Rockport Music, Rockport, MA  
8/9/2011, Arts on the Edge, Wolfeboro, NH.  
10/10/2011, American University in Bulgaria  
11/9/2011, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY  
8/2/2014, SOURCE Song Festival, Minneapolis, MN  
8/12/2014, Portland Conservatory, Portland, ME  
9/16/2014, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY

#### ***Wordsong Forum V performances***

9/17/2010, Emmanuel College, Boston, MA  
9/19/2010, house concert in Cambridge, MA  
3/13/2011, Goethe Institut, Boston, MA  
6/4/2013, Vancouver International Song Institute (VISI),  
Vancouver, Canada.

## Composers in Words and Song

Florestan has created several programs that present an audio-biographical look at American composers through their songs, including Samuel Barber, Virgil Thomson, and George Gershwin. In between the song groups, correspondence and other written records will be read, providing a concise audio-biographical experience of Barber's style and musical expression in song.

"Samuel Barber in Words and Song" debuted in 2014, and includes selections of Florestan's world premiere recordings of *Early Songs of Samuel Barber* (Florestan Records, 2013).

Virgil Thomson in Words and Song" debuted in 2015, and includes selections of Florestan's critically-acclaimed recording of *The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson* (New World Records, 2016).

### **"Samuel Barber in Words and Song" performances:**

10/4/2013, American Arts Experience-St. Louis, MO

4/12/2015, Schubert Club, Minneapolis, MN

Narration from Barber's letters, interviews, and writings

### **Program**

EARLY WORKS: CHILDHOOD COMPOSER

*Three Songs: The Words from Old England* (1925-1926)

1. Lady, when I behold the roses
2. An Earnest Suit to His Unkind Mistress Not to Forsake Him
3. Hey nonny no!

*Fantasy in Purple* (1925)

*Watchers* (1926)

MIDDLE WORKS: PROFESSIONAL COMPOSER

*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* (c.1935-36)

from *Four Songs, Op. 13*

Sure on this shining night (1938)

from *Hermit Songs, Op. 29*

Church Bell at Night (1952)

Promiscuity (1953)

from *Three Songs, Op. 10 (James Joyce)*

I Hear an Army (1936)

MATURED WORKS: MASTER, BUT TROUBLED COMPOSER

*Despite and Still, Opus 41* (1968)

A Last Song

My Lizard (Wish for a Young Love)

In the Wilderness

Solitary Hotel

Despite and Still

*Three Songs, Op. 45* (1972)

Now have I fed and eaten up the rose

A Green Lowland of Pianos

O boundless, boundless evening

### **"Virgil Thomson in Words and Song" performances:**

8/4/2015, SOURCE Song Festival, Minneapolis, MN

w/ guests Clara Osowski, mezzo-soprano Mark Bilyeu, pianist

Narration from Thomson's letters, interviews, and writings

### **Program**

**At the Spring** (Jasper Fisher, 1591-1643)

**Three Sentences from the Song of Solomon** (unpub. Old Testament)

**from Old English Songs:**

Remember Adam's Fall (Anonymous, 15th century)

Consider, Lord (John Donne, 1572-1631)

The Bell Doth Toll (Thomas Heywood, 1570-1641)

John Peel (John Woodcock Graves, 1795-1886)

**If Thou a Reason Dost Desire to Know** (Sir Francis Kynaston, 1587-1642)

**Five songs from William Blake** (William Blake, 1757-1827)

I. The Divine Image

II. Tiger! Tiger!

III. The Land of Dreams

IV. The Little Black Boy

V. And did those feet

**Preciosilla** (Gertrude Stein, 1874-1946)

**Susie Asado** (Stein)

**Portrait of F.B. (Francis Blood)** (Stein)

**Pigeons on the Grass, Alas...**(from *Four Saints in Three Acts*, Stein)

**Le Singe et le léopard** (Jean de La Fontaine, 1621-1695)

**What is it?** (Thomas Campion, 1567-1620)

**The Courtship of the Yongly Bongly Bo** (Edward Lear, 1812-1888)

**Dirge** (John Webster, 1580-1634)

**Two by Marianne Moore** (Marianne Moore, 1887-1972)

English Usage

My Crow Pluto

**The Cat** (Jack Larson, b. 1928)

**Mostly About Love** (Kenneth Koch, 1925-2002)

Love song

Down at the Docks

Let's Take a Walk

A Prayer to Saint Catherine

**Collected Poems** (Kenneth Koch)

**Florestan Recital Project and Maine State Ballet present**

**“The Poet’s Love”**

**A world premiere ballet to Schumann’s masterpiece, *Dichterliebe***

August 5 & 6, 12 & 13 at 7pm

Maine State Ballet Theater, 348 U.S. Route 1, Falmouth

**Original choreography by Linda MacArthur Miele.**

**Aaron Engebret, baritone; Alison d’Amato, pianist**

*with dancers*

Janet Davis, Kate Hamilton, Elizabeth Dragoni,  
Glenn Davis, Frederick Bernier, Michael Holden and Nathaniel Dombek

***Dichterliebe*, op. 48**

**Robert Schumann (1810-1849)  
words by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)**

1. Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
2. Aus meinen Tränen spriessen
3. Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube
4. Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'
5. Ich will meine Seele tauchen
6. Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome
7. Ich grolle nicht
8. Und wüssten's die Blumen, die kleinen
9. Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen
10. Hör' ich das Liedchen klingen
11. Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen
12. Am leuchtenden Sommermorgen
13. Ich hab' im Traum geweinet
14. Allnächtlich im Traume seh' ich dich
15. Aus alten Märchen winkt es hervor
16. Die alten, bösen Lieder



***The Peculiar Case of Dr. H.H. Holmes***  
**a Florestan Recital Project commission**

**Music and libretto by Libby Larsen**

Commissioned by Florestan Recital Project in 2010, *The Peculiar Case of Dr. H. H. Holmes* is a dynamic and horrific account of America's first-known serial killer, drawn from his memoirs and court transcripts.

In 2012, Florestan launched an original animated video to accompany the world premiere recording, designed in collaboration with graphic artist Rick Geary and Goldlust Design. (Audio/video recording is available at [http://www.florestanproject.org/florestan\\_new\\_site/projects/hhholmes/audio.html](http://www.florestanproject.org/florestan_new_site/projects/hhholmes/audio.html).)

*Florestan's performances of The Peculiar Case of Dr. H. H. Holmes are available with accompanying video, or in traditional recital format.*

***The Peculiar Case of Dr. H.H. Holmes***, for baritone and piano

Libby Larsen (b. 1950)

*\*Florestan commission and world premiere, 2010*

- I. I State my Case
- II. As a Young Man
- III. I Build my Business
- IV. Thirteen Ladies and Three Who Got Away (Grande Waltz Macabre)
- V. Evidence

Aaron Engebret, baritone

Alison d'Amato, pianist

***The Peculiar Case of Dr. H. H. Holmes performances:***

3/5/2010, American Vanguard Festival, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA(world premiere)

2/18/2011, ETHOS New Music Festival, SUNY Fredonia, Fredonia, NY

10/8/2011, AmBul Festival, Sofia, Bulgaria (European premiere)

3/13/2014, Schubert Club Courtroom Series, Minneapolis, MN

8/1/2014, SOURCE Song Festival, Minneapolis, MN

8/13/2014, Portland Conservatory of Music, Portland, ME

9/7/2014, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

9/15/2014, Eastman School of Music, Rochester, NY

## ***Evidence of Things Not Seen***

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

*Evidence of Things Not Seen* is Ned Rorem's compelling evening-length song cycle composed in 1998. The piece is seamless combination of solos, duets, trios, and quartets for 4 singers (SATB) and a pianist. It is a groundbreaking example of vocal chamber music, and Florestan worked directly with Ned Rorem to give the Boston premiere of the piece in 2003.

Regarding Florestan's presentation, Rorem has written:

*Of my hundreds of works, large and small, I would most like to be remembered by Evidence of Things Not Seen. This ninety-minute cycle of songs is a summation of all that I think and feel about vocal music.*

*The performance of Evidence, by the Florestan Recital Project, is exemplary and definitive. I am deeply moved that Florestan should wish to retain this work in their permanent repertory.* —Ned Rorem

Aaron Engebret, baritone; Joe Dan Harper, tenor; Martha Guth, soprano; Lynne McMurtry, mezzo-soprano  
Alison d'Amato, pianist

### ***Evidence of Things Not Seen***

Ned Rorem (b. 1923)

#### **Part One: Beginnings**

From Whence Cometh Song?  
The Open Road  
O Where Are You Going?  
The Rainbow  
How Do I Love Thee?  
Life in a Love  
Their Lonely Betters  
His Beauty Sparkles  
Boy with a Baseball Glove  
A Glimpse  
I Am He  
Love Cannot Fill  
The More Loving One  
Hymn for Morning

text by Theodore Roethke (1908-1963)  
text by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)  
text by W. H. Auden (1907-1973)  
text by William Wordsworth (1770-1850)  
text by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861)  
text by Robert Browning (1812-1889)  
text by W. H. Auden (1907-1973)  
text by Paul Goodman (1911-1972)  
text by Paul Goodman  
text by Walt Whitman  
text by Walt Whitman  
text by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892-1950)  
text by W. H. Auden  
text by Thomas Ken (1637-1711)

#### **Part Two: Middles**

I Saw a Mass  
The Comfort of Friends  
A Dead Statesman  
The Candid Man  
Comment on War  
A Learned Man  
Dear, Though the Night  
Requiescat  
Is My Team Ploughing?  
As I Walked Out One Evening  
The Sick Wife  
Now Is the Dreadful Midnight  
Hymn for Evening

text by John Woolman (1720-1772)  
text by William Penn (1644-1718)  
text by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)  
text by Stephen Crane (1871-1900)  
text by Langston Hughes (1902-1967)  
text by Stephen Crane  
text by W. H. Auden  
text by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900)  
text by A.E. Housman (1859-1936)  
text by W. H. Auden  
text by Jane Kenyon (1947-1995)  
text by Paul Goodman  
text by Thomas Ken

#### **Part Three: Ends**

He Thinks Upon His Death (L'Autre Sommeil)  
On an Echoing Road (L'Étoile Vesper)  
A Terrible Disaster  
Come In  
The Old Men Admiring Themselves in the Water  
End of the Day (La Fin de la Journée)  
Faith  
Even Now  
Evidence of Things not Seen

text by Julien Green (1900-1998)  
text by Colette (1873-1954)  
text by Paul Goodman  
text by Robert Frost (1874-1963)  
text by W.B. Yeats (1865-1939)  
text by Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867)  
text by Mark Doty (b. 1953)  
text by Paul Monette (1945-1995)  
text by William Penn

### ***Evidence of Things Not Seen performances:***

1/11/2003, Florestan Recital Project, Boston, MA  
(Boston premiere)  
2/23/2003, Music at the Cloud, Boston, MA

6/1/2003, Red House Festival, Providence, RI  
11/1/2006, Cincinnati College-Conservatory, OH  
9/22/2007, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA

# Florestan Recital Project – YouTube Links

Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfVr2QRlcvY>

The Peculiar Case of Dr. H. H. Holmes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSwdUIFjKMU>

Three Songs from New England (Samuel Barber)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V2vOgj7XLE0>

Watchers (Samuel Barber)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jJtU3Trw68>

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening Samuel Barber

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfAnHJti97A>

Fantasy in Purple (Samuel Barber)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRWi3V1EfmU>

Florestan Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6j90gcY4ZmgoQTnKrKZNHQ>

Artist Website: [http://www.florestanproject.org/florestan\\_new\\_site/index.html](http://www.florestanproject.org/florestan_new_site/index.html)

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## Florestan Recital Project – Photo Gallery



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# FLORESTAN RECITAL PROJECT

art song — past ▪ present ▪ future

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