



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY

The Meditation

REPAIRING THE FUTURE

SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENSEMBLE PEDAGOGY, AND
INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Dr. Eric M. Laprade & Dr. Colleen A.Q. Sears

The Midwest Clinic
Wednesday, December 20, 2023



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY

“At the heart of teaching others is the moral imperative to care. It is the imperative to perceive and act, and not look away.”

-Allsup & Shieh, 2012

THE ARTIVISM PROJECT

The Artivism Project (TAP) is a collective of faculty, staff, and students originating from TCNJ School of the Arts and Communication that aims to:

- Raise awareness about social justice issues through creative practice, pedagogy, and curriculum
- Engage our community in dialogue about social justice issues through aesthetic experience
- Cultivate partnerships that advocate for human rights and environmental justice through the arts
- Use the arts to help amplify marginalized, invisible, and silenced voices in our communities

THE ARTIVISM PROJECT: DRIVER SELECTION

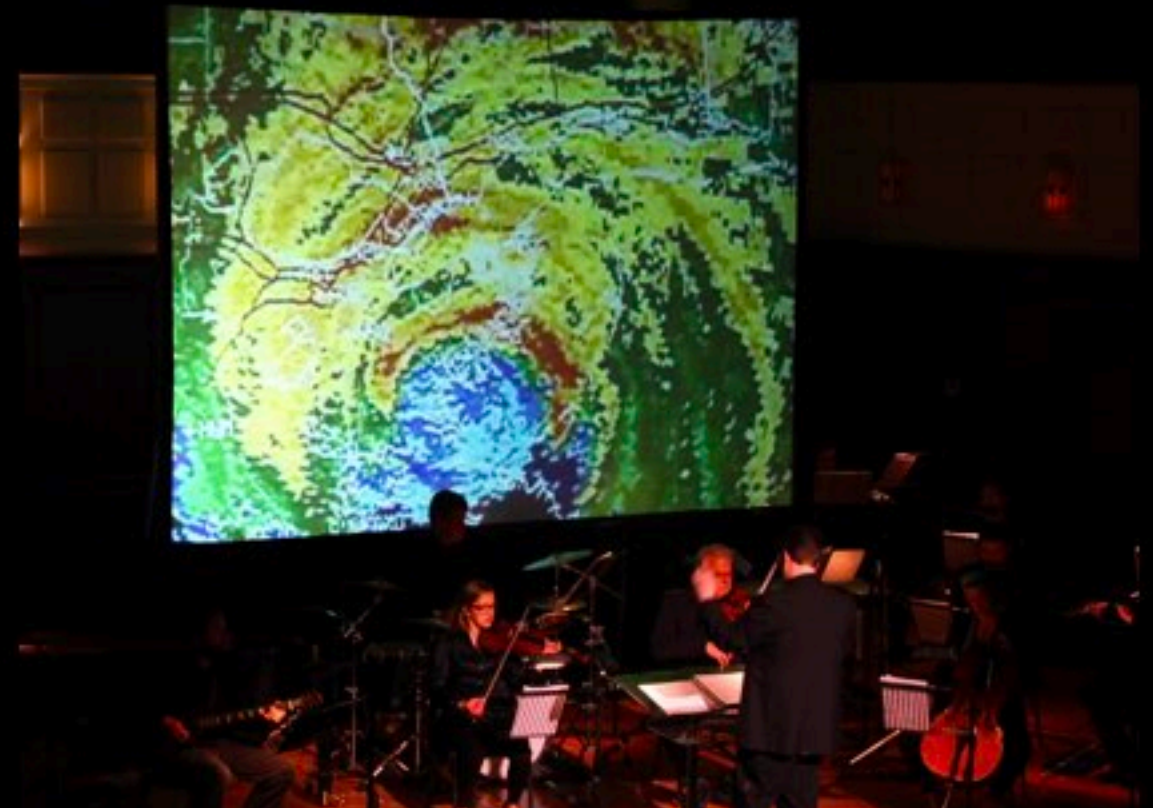
Starting point ideas for drivers:

- A broad, overarching thematic concept
- A specific issue related to social or environmental justice
- A person: activists, historical figures, artists, musicians, writers
- Dates and anniversaries of significant events
- Local significance

Other art forms/disciplines:

- Visual Art
- Music
- Poetry
- Novels
- Plays and musicals
- Dance

TED HEARNE'S **KATRINA & BALLADS**



SPRINGS ETERNAL



TCNJ WIND ENSEMBLE
& CONCERT BAND
Eric M. Laprade, conductor

Springs Eternal

ART • WATER • CHANGE

A collaboration between TCNJ's Department of Music, Art Gallery,
& Institute for Social Justice in the Arts [#SPRINGSETERNAL](#)



TCNJ THE COLLEGE OF
NEW JERSEY



@TCNJBANDS

Friday, March 8th 2019
Pre-Concert Discussion | 7:15pm
Performance | 8pm
TCNJ Art Gallery | 6-8pm
Mildred & Ernest E. Mayo Concert Hall
To purchase tickets:
tcnj.edu/boxoffice



RANKINE: WEATHER



Claudia Rankine

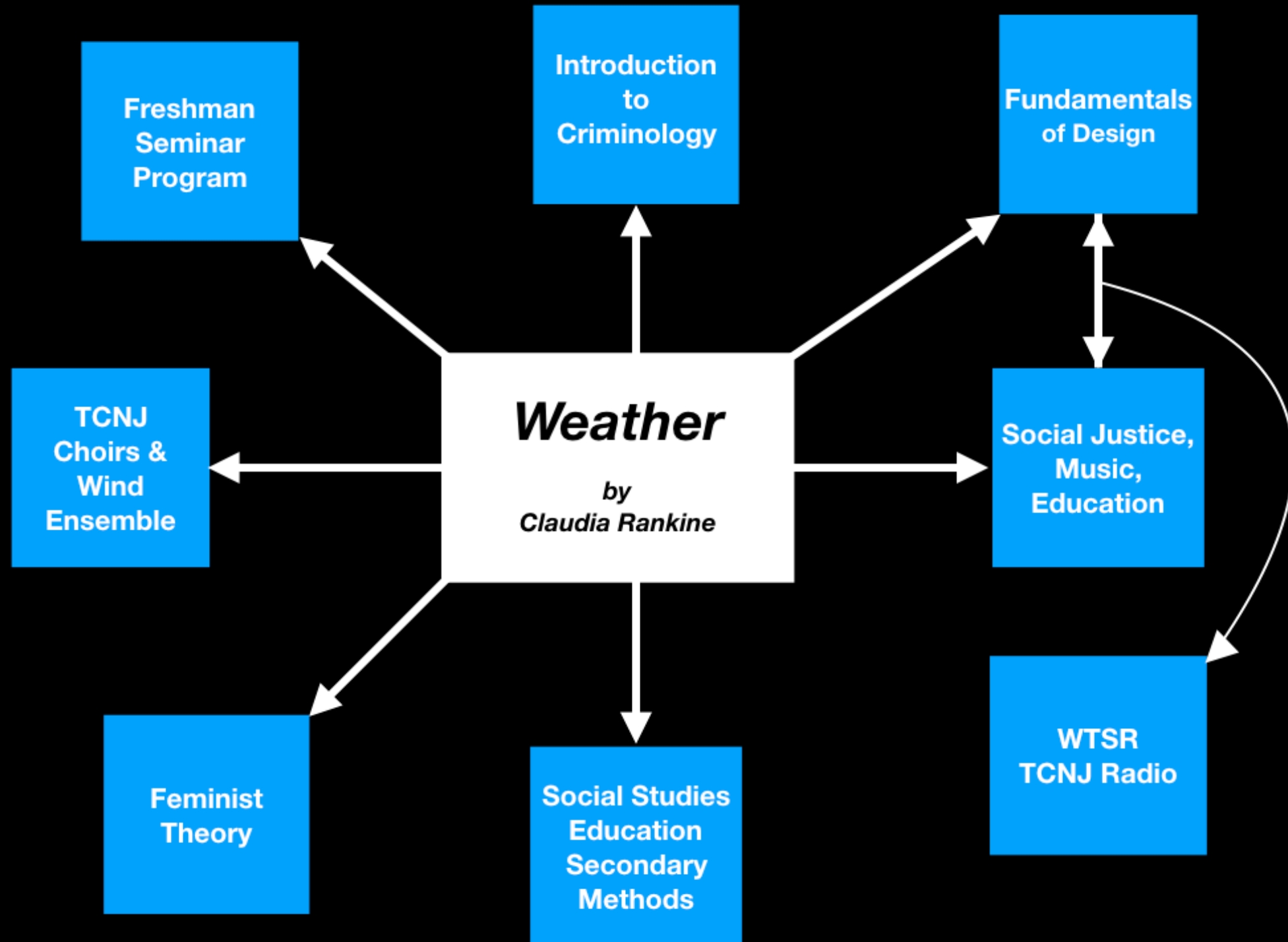
WEATHER

Claudia Rankine

On a scrap of paper in the archive is written
I have forgotten my umbrella. Turns out
in a pandemic everyone, not just the philosopher,
is without. We scramble in the drought of information
held back by inside traders. Drop by drop. Face
covering? No, yes. Social distancing? Six feet
under for underlying conditions. Black.
Just us and the blues kneeling on a neck
with the full weight of a man in blue.
Eight minutes and forty-six seconds.
In extremis, I can't breathe gives way
to asphyxiation, to giving up this world,
and then mama, called to, a call
to protest, fire, glass, say their names, say

their names, white silence equals violence,
the violence of again, a militarized police
force teargassing, bullets ricochet, and civil
unrest taking it, burning it down. Whatever
contracts keep us social compel us now
to disorder the disorder. Peace. We're out
to repair the future. There's an umbrella
by the door, not for yesterday but for the weather
that's here. I say weather but I mean
a form of governing that deals out death
and names it living. I say weather but I mean
a November that won't be held off. This time
nothing, no one forgotten. We are here for the storm
that's storming because what's taken matters.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS





TCNJ CHOIRS & WIND ENSEMBLE

Eric Laprade & John Leonard, conductors

In collaboration with TCNJ's Artivism Project

WEATHER

featuring the world premiere performance of *Weather* by Rollo Dilworth

Additional works by:

Viet Cuong

Melissa Dunphy

Ola Gjeilo

Friday, October 29 & Saturday October 30, 2021

Performances at 8:00pm

Mildred & Ernest E. Mayo Concert Hall

Purchase tickets: tcnj.edu/boxoffice

BACKGROUND



Rollo A. Dilworth

REHEARSAL PROCESS

Composer Collaborations



REHEARSAL PROCESS

Composer Notes

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Central Melodic Theme

Weather has a lot in common with the African American spiritual. Both the poem and the spirituals speak of remembrance, resistance, and resilience in the pursuit of social justice and social change. It seemed quite fitting to use melodic content from the refrain of *Stand the Storm* as a recurring and unifying theme throughout the work:

STAND THE STORM

O stand the storm, it won't be long, We'll an-chor bye and

bye, O brethren! Stand the storm, it won't be long, We'll an-chor bye and bye.

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Stand the Storm'. It features a piano introduction with a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The melody is a simple, folk-like tune. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score ends with a 'FINE' marking.

Work, J.W. (1998). *American Negro songs: 230 folk songs and spirituals, religious and secular*. Dover Publications, Inc.

In the spiritual *Stand the Storm*, African American slaves were able to covertly communicate the despair of their earthly bondage while simultaneously signaling the freedom that was to come after a successful escape or at the time of their death where a heavenly home awaited. The “storm” refers to the trials and tribulations of life such as slavery, racism, and poverty. To “anchor” means to reach one’s destination or to be at rest. Through these songs of sorrow and hope, the slaves were encouraged to exhibit patience, perseverance, and resilience; they knew their freedom would come “bye and bye” (sometime in the future, or in life after death).

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The “George Floyd” Motives

The notes G and F (concert pitches) are used to make references to the late George Floyd throughout the score. The “George Floyd” motives appear in the following ways:

- alternations between the notes G and F;
- the notes G and F played in combination;
- as a major 2nd downward step (G to F)
- as a minor 7th upward leap (G to F).

Numerical References in the Score

Number(s)	Reference	Appearance(s) in the Score
46	The age of George Floyd at the time of his death.	The tempo marking at the beginning of the score.
27	The number of times George Floyd uttered the words “I can’t breathe.”	The number of measures in the opening instrumental introduction. The number of beats in the opening vocal phrase. (6/8 + 6/8 + 6/8 + 9/8). The closing section of the piece, beginning at m. 315, marks a return of the 27-beat phrase structure (6/4 + 6/4 + 6/4 + 9/4). The number of times “I can’t breathe” is sung (mm. 158-180).
8:46	Mentioned in the poem, 8:46 was initially thought to be the amount of time George Floyd was under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer.	Metric shifts from 8/8 to 4/4 to 6/8 appear throughout the score, especially in an attempt to amplify the words “Eight minutes and forty-six seconds.” The chord progression for the “Stand the Storm” theme is I (or VIII) to IV to vi. The <i>Stand the Storm</i> theme appears in its entirety exactly three times in the entire piece; first time in E-flat major, second time in A-flat major, and third time in C major. The overarching progression for the theme is I (or VIII) to IV to VI.
9:29	Once the complete video evidence was revealed, 9:29 was the <i>actual</i> amount of time George Floyd was under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer.	Metric shifts from 9/8 to 2/4 to 9/8 are used to set the words “In extremis” (at the point of death). See mm. 148-150 and mm. 152-154.

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My analysis of the poem and the resulting musical setting can be summarized using the following sequence of themes: meditation, marginalization, memorial, meltdown, march, and mobilization.

The Meditation

Text	On a scrap of paper in the archive is written <i>I have forgotten my umbrella.</i> Turns out in a pandemic everyone, not just the philosopher, is without.
Measures	1 – 74

Within the 27-measure instrumental introduction is found the first appearance of the *Stand the Storm* theme in the key of E-flat major (mm. 13-19). Beginning in measure 28, the lower voices articulate the opening line of the poem. This 4-measure, 27-beat vocal theme should be sung in a hauntingly expressive manner so that an introspective mood is created. The treble voices should enter the texture with the same vocal character as the lower voices, with gradual increases in dynamics and intensity. As the “I have forgotten my umbrella” text unfolds, the unaccompanied voices reflect a sense of vulnerability and a feeling of being unprotected. Our shared humanity comes into focus as we realize that a pandemic does not discriminate.

The Marginalization

Text	We scramble in the drought of information held back by inside traders. Drop by drop. Face covering? No, yes. Social distancing? Six feet under for underlying conditions. Black. Just us and the blues kneeling on a neck with the full weight of a man in blue. Eight minutes and forty-six seconds. In extremis, <i>I can’t breathe</i> gives way to asphyxiation, to giving up this world, and then <i>mama</i> , called to, a call to protest, fire, glass,
Measures	75 – 180

The social, economic, health, and educational disparities that already existed within our communities are now exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. People of color and those with underlying conditions were found to be more vulnerable to the effects of the pandemic and therefore more likely to die. Issues of social injustice—particularly acts of police brutality—dominated the news headlines and social media platforms as much of the world’s population remained confined to their homes.

This section begins with a 12-bar blues. A descendent of the spiritual, this secular style developed in the rural South as freed African Americans faced poverty, discrimination, and an

REHEARSAL PROCESS

The Companion



[Home](#)

WEATHER

A COMPANION RESOURCE FOR EDUCATORS, STUDENTS & AUDIENCES

MUSIC BY ROLLO DILWORTH

TEXT BY CLAUDIA RANKINE

About this resource

This companion resource for *Weather* is intended for students, educators, conductors, and audiences to learn more about the social, political, and historical context of this work. The sections of this guide correspond directly to each section of the music. Simply click on an image below to access conductor notes, musical content information, suggested questions for discussion, and a list of recommended reading, watching, or listening for each section of the piece. This companion resource is not intended to be an exhaustive reference list or prescribed set of lesson plans, but rather an opportunity for everyone to more deeply understand this work and its critically important social and historical context. As you explore this resource, I challenge you to ask, *How do I relate to this work? How is my own story a part of this one?* Consider how can we use this work in the way that composer Rollo Dilworth intends; to become better citizens in our communities.

REHEARSAL PROCESS

The Companion



Home ▾

The Poem

About the Music

I have forgotten my umbr...

Information Held Back

Say Their Names

White Silence = Violence

Disorder the Disorder

Peace

World Premiere Perform...

For Conductors: Perform...

Project Contributors and ...

White Silence Equals Violence

Composer Notes

In this part of the poem, Rankine describes the consequences of complicity and the potential societal outcomes when frustrations run high, and confidence levels for systemic change run low.

Musical Content

Measures 205-213 are built on an octatonic collection supported by a persistent pounding of open D-flat chords in the bass range. The purpose here is to create a turbulent, dark and unsettling mood. Singers are encouraged to think critically about how their voices, facial gestures, and bodies can effectively communicate the actions and emotions described in the text.

Suggested Questions for Discussion

- What is meant by the term "positionality"? How does your positionality and racial identity impact how you hear this musical work?
- Can you think of a particular event or interaction that where your positionality and/or racial identity became a significant factor in how that event or interaction unfolded?
- How can privilege be used to impact positive change? What does the phrase "do the work" mean to you?
- View the suggested videos below. How does your own positionality relate to this content? What does an "archaeology of the self" look like for you? What does continuing "the work" look like for you?

Suggested Reading, Listening, Watching

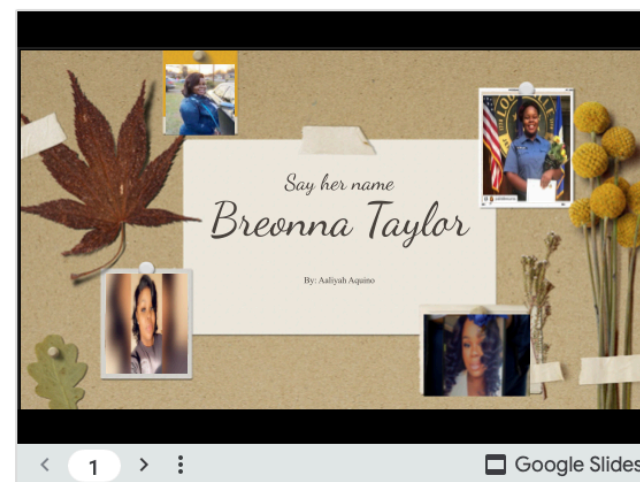
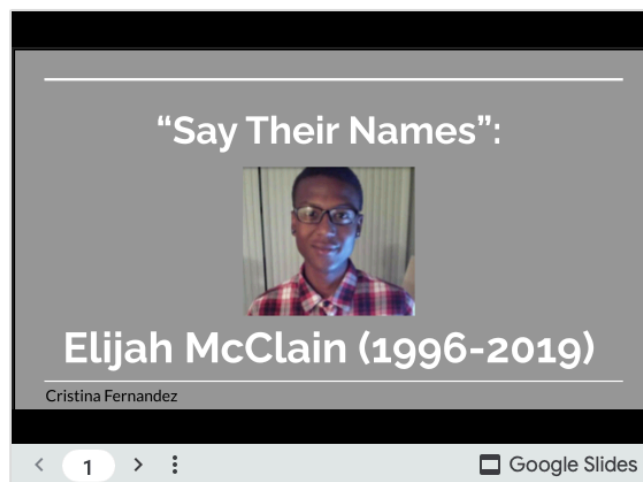


REHEARSAL PROCESS

The Companion

Suggested Learning Activity and Discussion

Each of the victims named in this section of the music was a person who lived in a community, had a family, had loved, and had dreams to pursue. In an effort to reframe the narrative around these stories, research the life of those whose names are recited in this section. Who did they love? Where did they live? How were they part of a community? Are you able to find this kind of information easily? Consider why or why not.



THE PERFORMANCES



STUDENT REFLECTIONS

“I learned so much while being involved with the Weather project. I was in both the choir and wind ensemble that semester and was able to learn the text and vocal part as well as the baritone saxophone part. Having both experiences allowed me to deeply understand the importance and gravity of this piece. We had the privilege to learn and perform this piece very soon after the height of the pandemic and George Floyd's death. The wounds were still fresh and this project required large amounts of vulnerability, respect, and high levels of musicianship. This experience was fulfilling and allowed me to learn more about our nation and the effects of the pandemic and years of systematic oppression. Dr. Dilworth was informative and kind and helped guide us through this challenging piece. Premiering Weather was one of the best experiences I had during my undergraduate studies at TCNJ.”

-Annie Pascale (TCNJWE member)

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

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-Annie Pascale (TCNJWE member)

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

“Navigating Weather and its intricacies added a depth to the composition besides the ink on the page for me. Discussing the African American experience in the ensemble let us humanize and deconstruct the headlines we saw in the news, which we imbued in our performance. We had the pleasure of collaborating with Dr. Dilworth in matching AND transcending the soundscape he had when he originally composed the piece. The adjustments we made such as swaying and jazz inflections went beyond notation and created a powerful experience for both audience and performers!”

-Keith So (TCNJWE member)

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THE HARD STUFF: "TO NOT LOOK AWAY"

- The role of positionality
 - How our own intersectional identities shape our hearing, interpretation, performance, and experience with repertoire
- Representing the diversity of human experiences
- Divides are painful and Recognizing the limits of art
 - Literature selection: teaching: action
- The unknown impact

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Take time to understand the needs, values, and priorities of the communities in which we teach
- What approach makes the most sense given the realities of the community?
- Build a coalition of support
- Balancing engagement with the world around us with escape from the world around us

REFLECTIONS

- Ensemble music-making as a vehicle to explore difficult and complex topics
- Increased student investment and motivation through contextualized learning
- Reflection and growth amongst faculty-collaborators, students, community members, and the institution
- Opportunity for meaningful interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaborations amongst faculty members
- Creation of new works of art and innovative curriculum

OUR CURRENT WORK

**SPRING 2024:
LIFE AFTER LOSS**

REPAIR THE FUTURE



[BIT.LY/TCNJWEATHER](https://bit.ly/tcnjweather)

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