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# *The Summers Case*

Music and Libretto by  
**Sonnet Swire**

Candidate, Bachelor of Music degree, 2016  
Student of John Heiss and Michael Gandolfi

Conductor	Radu Marian Paponiu
Director	Celeste Godin
Musical Preparation	Patricia Au

*There will be no intermission*

Friday, May 13, 2016  
8:30 p.m.  
Williams Hall

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

BOBBY SUMMERS	Steven Hyland
WILLOW SUMMERS	Amanda Levy
DASHA JONES	Katherine Crabill
VERA ZUCKERMAN	Brooke Dircks
CARL SEYMOUR	Eric Viñas
JUSTIN NODER	Gina Ruzhansky
JAMES "UNCLE JIMMY" SUMMERS	Timothy Ayres-Kerr
THE VOODOO WITCH	Meghan Jolliffe

with Special Guest Star

POLICE OFFICER Zak Cover

## NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA

Radu Marian Paponiu, *Conductor*

<i>First Violin</i>	Abigail Hong
<i>Second Violin</i>	Leonard Fu
<i>Viola</i>	Mira Williams
<i>Cello</i>	Magali Toy
<i>Double Bass</i>	Nicholas Myers
<i>Flute/Piccolo</i>	Michelle Sung
<i>Oboe</i>	Andrew Port
<i>Clarinet</i>	Aleksis Martin
<i>Bassoon</i>	Cheryl Fries
<i>French horn</i>	Alex Stening
<i>Trumpet</i>	Jeffrey Cox
<i>Trombone</i>	Robyn Smith
<i>Percussion</i>	Harrison Honor, Bryce Leafman
<i>Piano</i>	Shane Simpson
<i>Mandolin/ Guitar</i>	Alec Whiting

## Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC

–continued

**MELBA SANDBERG MEMORIAL CONCERT**, Jane Ezbicki and Adam Grossman, conductors  
NEC Junior Repertory Orchestra and NEC Youth Repertory Orchestra  
**Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

### PREP CI MASH-UP

Contemporary improvisation ensembles perform  
**Friday, May 27, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., Pierce Hall**

### PREP STRING CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, YOUTH BRASS ENSEMBLE, & CELLO CHOIR

**Friday, May 27, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

### PREP STRING CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, Peter Jarvis, conductor

**Sunday, May 31, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

### PREP YOUTH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA, David Loebel, conductor

Shostakovich *Symphony No. 1 in F Minor*; Khachaturian *Concerto for Violin in D Minor*, Haig Hovsepian, violin

**Friday, June 4, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

### SUMMER INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE PRACTICE (SICPP)

Stephen Drury, artistic director; Vinko Globokar, Composer-in-Residence; Marilyn Nonkin, guest artist; Callithumpian Consort, Ensemble-in-Residence

**Sunday, June 19-Friday, June 24, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**Saturday, June 25, 2016 at 4:00 p.m., Brown Hall**

## Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC

–continued

**NEC YOUTH SYMPHONY**, Stephen Karidoyanes, director  
Hanson *Symphony No. 2, op 30 “Romantic”*; Gershwin *An American in Paris*  
**Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**NEC YOUTH PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA & BOSTON BALLET’S  
NEXT GENERATION**, David Loebel, conductor  
The performance showcases students from the Boston Ballet School’s Pre-Professional Program, as well as dancers from Boston Ballet II; music by Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Ambroise Thomas, and Wolf-Ferrari  
**Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., Boston Opera House** – tickets required

**CHAMBER MUSIC GALA III**  
**Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**HONORS ENSEMBLE: NEC Jazz Honors Ensemble**  
**Wednesday, May 18, 2016 at 8:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**NEC COMMENCEMENT CONCERT**  
**Saturday, May 21, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH WIND ENSEMBLE (MYWE) & JR. MYWE**  
Al Dentino and David Samour, directors  
**Monday, May 23, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**NEC PREP BAROQUE ENSEMBLES**, Aldo Abreu, conductor  
**Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., Williams Hall**

**NEC YOUTH CHORALE**, Jonathan Richter, conductor  
Orff *Carmina burana*  
**Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

## SYNOPSIS

\*Note that the libretto was written before the Supreme Court decision allowing nation-wide same-sex marriage

### SCENE I

In the swamp lands of modern day Florida, the summer was just beginning. Twelve-year-old Willow Summers, and her older brother, seventeen-year-old Bobby Summers, are brought to Crossroads Temporary Home for Displaced Youth by straitlaced social worker, Dasha Jones. Their mother, Babette, has died, and their father, Willis, cannot be found, as it is expected that he abandoned his family in the midst of his wife’s illness.

Willow does not understand the circumstances and believes that their father will return for them, but Bobby knows better. Meanwhile, Dasha tactlessly explains to the children that they’re better off without their father, and she will try to contact their maternal grandmother, Vera Zuckerman. Until then, Bobby and Willow have to stay in the halfway house. Dasha leaves, and Willow is brimming with questions and starts to irritate Bobby. She asks her brother why Dasha was rude to them, and Bobby tells her the story of the kitten, Jupiter; a story of compassion and forgiveness that Babette would tell Bobby when he misbehaved in school as a young child.

### SCENE II

The children’s maternal grandmother, Vera, arrives at the halfway house, where she is greeted by the house coordinator and Dasha’s boss, Carl Seymour. She asks to see her grandchildren and is dissatisfied when Carl explains that he must arrange a meeting for them due to security protocol.

Carl shows Vera to the office, where they are joined by Dasha, so that they can discuss the fate of the children. Vera mourns the death of her only child Babette, and then readily assumes that she would take her grandchildren, only to grow angry when the social workers explain that she is too old and financially unstable to assume guardianship. Vera resorts to name-calling until Dasha and Carl convince her to try to find family members from Willis’s side that would want the children. However, time is running out, because the half-way house has a limited number of beds, and eventually Bobby and Willow would need to be put into foster homes if no qualifying family members step forward.

Vera obliges, and then asks Carl again if she can see her grandchildren, to which Carl agrees. He leaves Dasha and Vera alone in the office to retrieve the children. While together, Vera tries to make small talk with Dasha, which soon becomes a discussion of a woman's role in society, and the concept of feminism according to two different generations of women.

Carl returns with the children, and Vera, Willow, and Bobby have a small reunion. It becomes clear to Vera that Bobby has grown insufferably pessimistic, and Willow was still naïve to what was happening in their situation. Vera tries to explain gently but truthfully what Willis has done, which makes Willow become solemn and recede to the barracks. Vera and Bobby are alone, and through his frustration, Bobby is finally able to express his conflicting emotions: mourning, resentment, and his loyalty to Willow.

### SCENE III

Willow is crying softly in the barracks when she meets a strange boy whom some would call disturbing. Justin Noder, a fourteen-year-old boy who has been in the foster care system for a while, approaches Willow and starts to chat with her. During their conversation, Justin confides in Willow that he has trouble empathizing with people, which he then readily displays with Willow. However, he tells Willow that he wants to be a better person. Willow takes this as a glimmer of hope for Justin and befriends him.

Meanwhile, Dasha and Carl are working in the office, when Carl tells Dasha about a rumor he heard about cats and dogs going missing in the neighborhood. Dasha is impatient with his gossiping until she comes across a paper placed on her desk. Justin's most recent foster parents brought him back to the halfway house because he was inciting violence towards their pets and young daughter. Carl states that Justin belongs locked up in an institution, which draws criticism from Dasha, who believes he's having behavioral problems due to childhood trauma and needs therapy, not to be locked away. This causes Carl to go on a rant about how he's grown jaded over the years by corrupt children and families, but Dasha remains steadfast in her service to underserved children. Carl undermines this idealist view, saying that he's already seen Dasha change since becoming a social worker.

Suddenly, Dasha's phone rings. Dasha answers to Vera on the other end, saying that she has made contact with the children's paternal uncle in Chicago, James Summers. She explains that James and his spouse want to take their niece and nephew, and he has already booked a flight to Florida first thing in the morning.

### Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

**Gustavo D'Amico**, *jazz saxophone* (M.M.)  
Student of Frank Carlberg and Jerry Bergonzi  
**Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room**

**Russell Holzman**, *jazz drums* (B.M.)  
Student of John McNeil and Jason Moran  
**Monday, May 16, 2016 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room**

**Josh Quinn**, *bass-baritone* (AD)  
Student of MaryAnn McCormick  
**Thursday, May 19, 2016 at 7:30 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**Nelson Woods**, *tuba* (GD)  
Student of Mike Roylance  
**Wednesday, June 1, 2016 at 6:30 p.m., Brown Hall**

### Other Upcoming Concerts at NEC

**NEC PREP VOICE RECITAL**  
A group voice recital  
**Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 12:00 noon, Williams Hall**

**NEC PREP HARP RECITAL**  
A group harp recital  
**Saturday, May 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m., Keller Room**

**NEC PREP CHORUSES**  
Performances by the NEC Preparatory Chorus, Camerata, Chamber Chorus, Children's Chorus, Young Women's Chorus, Youth Chorale, and Preparatory CI A Cappella – directed by Cristi Catt, Sarah Houghton, and Jonathan Richter  
**Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 2:00 p.m., Jordan Hall**

**NEC PREP SUZUKI CONCERT**  
**Sunday, May 15, 2016 at 5:00 p.m., Brown Hall**

*Radu Marian Paponiu, Celeste Godin, and Patricia Au for their expertise and  
patience as I stumbled through this process*

*The musicians for making this operetta a reality*

*My teachers, Michael Gandolfi and John Heiss,  
who have pushed me to new heights I didn't think possible for me*

*Other NEC Faculty and Staff who have made my time here so wonderful:  
Lyle Davidson, Allie Cionco Dahlberg, Leah McKinnon Howe, Lisa Howe,  
Pamela Harris, Helen Greenwald, Matthias Truniger, Larry Scripp,  
Bert van Herck, Anne Hallmark, Gretchen Breese, and the ResLife Crew*

*Tasha and Vinny*

*Mom, Bob, Kelly, and Tyler*

*The Squad:*

*Katy Crabill, Brooke Dircks, Sara Law, Amanda Levy,  
Alex Sheerin, Eric Viñas, and Zak Cover*

*Special Shout-Out to my boiz since day one:*

*Lyle Davidson and John Heiss,  
who have been my resident grandpas and never gave up on me.  
Thank you for creating a space where I felt safe failing,  
thus allowing me to come back stronger in all areas of my life.*

#### SCENE IV

Vera picks James up from the airport, where they reminisce of old times before Willis became estranged from James, and how heartbroken James is over the death of Babette. Vera explains to James that Willow and Bobby have been living insecurely; evictions, possible child abuse, a sick mother, etc. James isn't surprised and says that he and his brother, Willis, grew up poor, and that it's extremely difficult to crawl out of poverty, so Willis probably couldn't tell how poor their quality of life was.

Back at the halfway house, Justin and Bobby meet for the first time when Bobby finds Willow and Justin playing a board game. Justin can't resist himself and insults Bobby, but then Willow reminds him that he's "working on being nice, remember?" Justin backs down, creating an extremely confused Bobby, who then tells Justin to leave so that he can talk to his sister alone. Something about Justin doesn't feel right to Bobby, so he forbids Willow from talking to Justin, to which Willow protests. They leave the fight fuming.

#### SCENE V

Vera takes James to the halfway house to discuss the children with Dasha. All seems well during their discussion, and it looks as though James will be able to take Bobby and Willow, but it is discovered that his spouse is actually a man and that they're a same sex couple, which is legal in the state of Illinois but not in Florida. Florida, having anti LGBT laws and strict sanctions against same-sex couples adopting children, stands in the way of their plan, and Dasha regrettably informs James that this isn't possible.

Suddenly, a scream can be heard, and Carl rushes into the office to find Dasha. Carl informs her that several animals were found dissected and hidden under the shed, the animals that had gone missing a few days prior. Carl immediately blames Justin, and this riles up Vera and James, who are furious that the alleged killer is living with Bobby and Willow. Justin, who is hearing this from the next room, grows scared and decides that he must run away, but first he manipulates Willow to come with him. Bobby is away at the store buying snacks for Willow and is unable to stop his sister from running away with Justin.

Carl, Vera, and James burst into the barracks mad-mob style while unsuccessfully being reined in by Dasha. Bobby enters, and recognizes his uncle, Jimmy, but their reunion is cut short by the pressing issue at hand: where are Justin and Willow?

## SCENE VI

Justin and Willow are walking through a dark swamp. Willow is persistent in trying to get information out of Justin, but Justin keeps stalling. They are discovered by an older woman who says they're trespassing on her swamp, and Justin apologizes. Suddenly, the older woman recognizes Justin, saying that she saw him in her swamp with her cat a few days ago. She grows angrier when she looks into Justin's mind, seeing the disturbing things he has done.

The woman, or witch, declares herself a practitioner of voodoo magic, and says that she will help Justin overcome his grotesque urges if he gives her Willow as payment. Justin adamantly refuses, and the witch bargains with him. If Justin tells Willow what he did to the animals and his foster sister, then the witch will set his mind free. The witch leaves, and Justin eventually breaks down and tells Willow what he has done, but that he still yearns to be a good person. Willow is scared, but believes him. However, Justin loses his temper after Willow suggests that they should go back to the halfway house, and attacks Willow. After a struggle, Willow is able to grab hold of a rock, and hits Justin in an effort to get away...

## ABOUT THE COMPOSER:

Sonnet "Sonnie Rae" Swire is enjoying her status as the dark horse while she emerges quickly onto the classical music scene.

Sonnet spent her formative years happily in a doublewide in rural Michigan or moving from shack to shack in the swamps of Florida. She grew up with the music of Willie Nelson and Motown Records, while being influenced by her paternal grandmother who played the organ, and paternal uncle who played guitar in a band that toured the American southeast and Midwest. However, her own music education didn't start until the age of twelve when she started tuba in the public school system.

From there, Sonnet was largely self-taught in the areas of theory and composition with support and guidance from a few teachers during her teenage years. At seventeen, she lost her parents suddenly and moved across country to live with her older sister in New Jersey, where she finished her high school degree online, allowing more time for music and composition.

At eighteen, Sonnet began formal training at New England Conservatory in Boston with teachers John Heiss and Michael Gandolfi, among others. By age twenty-one, she has had her work performed in the U.S., Canada, and

Europe, in venues ranging from outreach programs to top tier American orchestras. She has been awarded many accolades, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters' Charles Ives Scholarship, one of the most prestigious awards that can be awarded to a composition student. Sonnet will start her master's degree this fall at McGill University in Montreal on full fellowship with composer Melissa Hui (accompanied by her beloved Maine Coons, Derp and Katrinka), after attending Aspen as a composition fellow this summer.

*– This project is the recipient of one of NEC's  
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