The Dickinson Ensemble is Looking for Partners

Emily Dickinson in Verse and Song,
A Literature and Music Residency

For high school or college literature and music programs
with The Dickinson Ensemble

Emily Dickinson in Verse and Song is a two-day, five-session residency that brings the poet's legacy to life by studying her work through the composition of new verses and songs.

Using structured directions based on Dickinson's work, this program guides student poets and composers through the process of verse and song composition. The goal is to help students learn about America's greatest poet while exploring the creative process for themselves.

The Dickinson Ensemble members and the school's literature and music faculty collaborate before and during the program to shape, then present, the materials to the participants. TDE and the school faculty then present the material and work with the participants to create and develop their poems and compositions.

The residency concludes with a concert by The Dickinson Ensemble.

Day 1

All participants attend every session.

Session 1: The Words and Music Session presents the literature and music participants with discussions of Dickinson's life and poetry, an examination of how composers have written music based upon her work, and an introduction to the Poetry and Music Composition Sessions.

Session 2: Poetry Composition is a closer examination of Dickinson's verse forms with a focus on Common Measure and how to write in it. Both poets and composers begin work on writing verses in Common Measure.

Session 3: Music Composition is a practical workshop for composers on creating their own music using Dickinson's poems and forms as guides.

Dickinson Ensemble members discuss and demonstrate techniques for writing on their instruments: voice, flute, cello, and piano.

Then participants begin writing music using Dickinson's poems for the lyrics.

These workshop guidelines are, of course, suggestions. Structure gives one a place to begin, but the creation of work beyond the guidelines will also be encouraged. Composers can also base their work on their own poems, those of the participant poets, or on Dickinson's own verse.

Day 2

Session 4: Poetry Reading. Participants read and workshop their poems. These poems are then assigned to the composers who will set them to music with the poets' help.

Session 5: Musical Composition starts setting the participants' poems to music by working with Dickinson Ensemble members and school faculty on flute, cello, piano, voice, and composition.

It generally takes more than two days to compose a piece of music, so most compositions will be unfinished at the end of the residency, but both the poets and composers will have everything they need to complete their works, should they choose to do so, either on their own or with their instructors' assistance. Whether they complete their pieces or not, the goal is to give them a better understanding of the creative process in general and Dickinson's legacy in particular.

The residency concludes that evening with:

The Dickinson Ensemble in Concert

This concert can be either a Dickinson Ensemble performance of legacy pieces and movements from *Emily Sings* by Don Skoog

or

A Choral Concert with The Dickinson Ensemble and choral ensembles from the school performing *Bloom Upon the Mountain and Other Songs*, a three movement suite for chamber ensemble and SSA chorus by Don Skoog, and selections from legacy choral works based on Dickinson's poetry.

This program can be shortened to a one-day residency as well.

This is a very general program description. For more detailed information, or if you have suggestions for how we can shape this residency to accommodate your school, please contact:

Don Skoog
708 524-8605
dskoog@mac.com

Don Skoog is an independent composer, musician, and writer. He is Director of The Dickinson Ensemble, a chamber group that composes and performs music based on the work of Emily Dickinson, for which he composed *Emily Sings*, a twelve-movement suite for soprano, flute, cello, and piano. His many other compositions include *Water and* Fire for solo marimba, *La Cantilena de las Luces* for percussion ensemble, commissioned by Millikin University, and three newly-published marimba trio works, *Attendance to Ritual, Art Song,* and *Mozambique*.

His composition teachers included William Ferris, Karel Husa, Gordon Stout, and Willie Pickens. He has taught at The American Conservatory of Music and Sherwood Music School.

Mr Skoog has given presentations at the University of Wisconsin (Madison and Milwaukee), Northwestern University, Valparaiso University, Vandercook College, Kansas State University, Colorado State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, the Nashville Jazz Workshop, and Millikin University.

He has led educational trips to Cuba, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Morocco, and Colombia, and is author of *Batá Drumming; The Instruments, the Rhythms, and the People Who Play Them*, published by CMP Press.

He is also a member of The Emily Dickinson International Society Arts Committee.

The Dickinson Ensemble is a chamber group devoted to the composition and performance of musical works inspired by the poet's literary legacy. TDE performs works by Copland, Fine, Sydeman, Bacon, and Boziwick, and other composers.

TDE also composes and commissions new works. In March, they premiered *Emily Sings*, a chamber suite for soprano, flute, cello, and piano by Don Skoog. They are now preparing a choral suite for the ensemble and SSA chorus, *Bloom Upon the Mountain and Other Songs*, and are also in early preparations for an Emily Dickinson opera.

While there are already hundreds of compositions inspired by her work, there is always room for new creations, so TDE actively seeks collaborations with musicians, dancers, visual artists, theater companies, and literary societies to produce new and original visions of her work.

TDE also gives literary presentations for musical clubs, musical presentations for literary clubs, high school residencies, and interdepartmental programs for colleges and universities.

The Dickinson Ensemble is Jennifer Haworth, soprano, Kim Fleuchaus, flutes, Herine Coetzee Koschak, cello, Miles Andrew Sutton, piano and oboe, and Don Skoog, composer and percussionist. To see their videos go to: thedickinsonensemble.org