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THE THUMBELINA POEMS

DR. ANNE CHRISTOPHERSON, SOPRANO
CALLIE STADEM, HARP
MERIE KIRBY, POET

February 28, 2026 | 4:30 pm

Josephine Campbell Recital Hall | Hughes Fine Arts Center

PROGRAM

Welcome & Remarks

Merie Kirby, poet

The Thumbelina Poems (2026)

1. Maybe you don't know the story
2. Waking in the walnut shell
3. Wet piles of rust and iron
4. A butterfly sashed in white silk
5. Remember, say the June bugs
6. Because she is modest and understands
7. Thumbelina thinks that if she were big
8. Sometimes she regrets vilifying the old mole
9. The secret words she spoke
10. Astride the robin's back
11. The winged people took her in
12. Thumbelina sits alone
13. Thumbelina fell in love
14. Who did Thumbelina love?
15. Another child the size of a thimble

Anne Christopherson, soprano

Callie Stadem, harp

Callie Stadem
(b. 1991)

BIOGRAPHIES

Merie Kirby is a Teaching Assistant Professor and Director of the Honors Program at the University of North Dakota. She grew up in California and attended the College of Creative Studies at UCSB for her B.A. in Literature. She earned her M.F.A. from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. She is the author of *The Dog Runs On* (2014) and *The Thumbelina Poems* (2015). In 2016 and 2013 she received the North Dakota Council on the Arts Individual Artist Grant. Her poems have been published in *Mom Egg Review*, *Whale Road Review*, *SWWIM*, *FERAL*, *Strange Horizons*, and other journals; she also writes operas and art songs in collaboration with composers. You can find her online at www.meriekirby.com.

Callie Stadem is a harpist and composer based in Grand Forks, ND. She is a member of the faculty at Concordia College (Moorhead, MN) as a harp instructor and teaches harp, composition, and voice privately throughout the Red River Valley. She has also served as a faculty member at the International Music Camp, and as the director of the Red River Harp Ensemble in Fargo, ND, an ensemble for harpists of all different ages and skill levels. As a free-lance harpist and composer, Callie maintains a busy performance schedule in the tri-state area with regional symphonies, chamber ensembles, and as a solo artist. Callie earned her M.M in Music Composition at the University of North Dakota (2016), as well as a B.A. in Music and Philosophy from Augustana University in Sioux Falls, SD (2013). Highlights of her composition portfolio include her chamber opera, *The Ransom of Sophia* (also premiered at UND) and the children's musical, *Smelly Scallywags*.

Soprano, **Anne Christopherson** enjoys a rewarding career as an educator, performer, and coach. Her “dazzlingly supple voice,” has been acclaimed in many genres in such venues as Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall, Symphony Space, the Banff Centre for the Arts, Opera di Lucca (Italy), Renmin University (Beijing), the Colorado Symphony Orchestra, and the Colorado Music Festival. As a cabaret artist, *Cabaret Scenes* magazine lauded her “well-honed ability to convey emotion, tenderness, and poignancy...” in her one-woman show, *I Hear Music*, which premiered at The Duplex cabaret in NYC. In addition to the premiere of *The Thumbelina Poems*, Anne has performed the world premieres of *Oddly Beautiful* and *Three Songs to Texts by Terry Jacobson* by North Dakota composer, Michael Wittgraf, and *In the beginning, mountains*, by Canadian composer, Diana McIntyre. She performed the France premiere of Christopher Berg’s *Four Songs on Poems by Vladimir Nabokov* in Paris with UND alumna, pianist and Grand Prix du Disque winner, Mary Dibbern. In addition to her duties as Associate Professor of Voice at the University of North Dakota she has been a music and stage director for musicals and operas as well as a collaborative pianist and coach for choirs and classical and non-classical singers at the high school and collegiate levels and in community theatre. She has taught also taught master classes at other institutions in the United States, Canada, and China.
