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Past and Present - Program Note

Past and Present is inspired by pioneering journalist and adventurer Nellie Bly, largely known for her exposé on the conditions of Blackwell's Island (now Roosevelt Island) asylum in New York City. Her reporting was chronicled in a series of articles for *New York World* and then published in the 1887 book *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. The articles shed light onto the neglected conditions of the institution, leading to a government investigation of the facility and eventually calling for funding and structural changes.

Scored for narrator and chamber orchestra, the work features new text by Marco Grosse utilizing concepts and themes from *Ten Days in a Mad-House*, aims to illuminate such concepts as well as underscore the social model of disability and difference.

Past Present was written in the spring of 2019 in Shanghai, China, and is commissioned by and dedicated to Albany Symphony and David Alan Miller, music director.