



Alton High Alum Spencer Domer Composes Choral Tribute to Local Man's War Poems

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - Spencer Domer, a 2019 Alton High and 2023 Millikin University graduate on Friday, March 8, 2024, surprised Alton poet John Dunphy with his recent newly composed choral cycle: "Seven Songs of John Dunphy."



"I composed this with some of Alton poet John Dunphy's favorite texts," he said. "I used texts from Dunphy's book, *Old Soldiers Fading Away*, a collection of poetry about the Vietnam War."

Domer is currently at Ball State University studying for a Masters in Choral Conducting. He is the Founding Artistic Director of the newly organized "Riverbend Youth Chorale."



Domer said he bought Dunphy's book, "Old Soldiers Fading Away" (2006), years ago for his dad because his grandfather served in the Vietnam War.

"These poems about the Vietnam War have been very insightful and effective to my dad," Domer said. "Two days ago, I visited my dad and found the book and was able to look at the poems from a different perspective. I was inspired to write this music which happened quite fast, fully written in two days."

Domer added: "John Dunphy's poetry is so incredibly effective and inspiring, his ability to not only show the harsh realities of veteran experiences but also use emotionally charged scenarios to fully impact the reader leads to his work inspiring me. John is a shining star of the Alton community. His bookstore and work in our backyards is so important to keeping Alton heavily supportive of the arts."