

Liquid Architecture

Saturday, December 10, 7PM

Sunday, December 11, 3:30PM • 7:30PM

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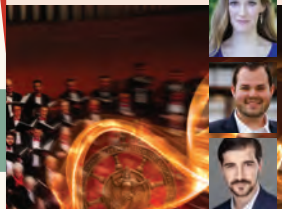
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Music is liquid architecture; architecture is frozen music.

Attributed to Goethe (1749-1832)

...there is a big connection between music and the way you can create a space.

Zaha Hadid (1950-2016), Iraqi-British architect

The arts are really limitless in creating space for wonder, aren't they?

Both literally and figuratively.

This semester, inspired by our 20th anniversary, we returned to one of our most beloved ideas to frame our work together: the intersection of architecture and music. We love this theme because it has a secret super-power outcome: In order to understand and appreciate the myriad ways music and architecture follow similar rules and cues, you have to take time to study and mostly, to notice. You have to ask questions, listen to, and appreciate ideas other than your own, look closer, and keep noticing.

We love doing this type of inquiry every week through the lens of music—it's fun, and meaningful, especially on concert day when we are rewarded with sharing our work with an audience. But that secret super-power outcome of growing our noticing muscles is equally rewarding for us because it transfers to every part of life and makes us better at being students, friends, and colleagues.

Thank you for being here, in this space for noticing and wondering. Enjoy the concert(s)!

SPECIAL THANKS

Did you know that our conducting staff all have full-time jobs in music education in addition to their work with MYC? They work in a variety of K-12 settings, teaching, supporting educators, designing and leading outreach programs, and much more. After working all week, they come to MYC on Sundays and give their best to our singers. Join us in thanking them for their incomparable commitment to, and seemingly endless enthusiasm for, educating and inspiring young people. Celebrating our 20th anniversary season is about celebrating these amazing people who are the heart and soul of our organization.

ABOUT THESE CONCERTS

MYC's winter concerts are generously endowed by the Diane Ballweg Performance Fund and supported by Dane Arts (with additional funds from the Endres Mfg. Company Foundation, The Evjue Foundation, charitable arm of The Capital Times, the W. Jerome Frautschi Foundation, and the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation), the Madison Arts Commission, and the Wisconsin Arts Board, with additional funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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PLEASE NOTE

Every MYC concert is recorded, and each concert represents the extraordinary effort and hard work of our young musicians. Help them remember their performance for its artistry, not its interruptions, by silencing or turning off all electronic devices. If you are attending with young children and they are having trouble enjoying the concert quietly, thank you for stepping out into the lobby.

ABOUT THE COVER ART

Iraqi-British architect Zaha Hadid famously said, "There are 360 degrees. Why stick to one?" Our cover art, showing an actual wall section from the Galaxy SOHO building complex in Beijing, one of Hadid's most celebrated designs, brilliantly displays the idea of liquid architecture and inspires us to keep noticing and keep wondering. Special thanks to Art & Sons, our graphic design team, for bringing this architect into our conversations this semester and for this evocative cover art.



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LIQUID ARCHITECTURE

7:00pm Saturday, December 10
Middleton Performing Arts Center

PURCELL

Margaret Jenks, conductor
Andrew Johnson, piano

BRITTEN

Randal Swiggum, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

HOLST

Margaret Jenks and Randal Swiggum, conductors

PURCELL



Fall, Fall, Fall

Lajos Bárdos (1899-1986)

What can you build with very limited material? Many architects have taken on that challenge. The Farnsworth House designed by Mies van der Rohe is very simple and nearly all glass, but is very beautiful in the way it melds into nature. What could you compose with very limited materials? How about just a scale? Just a scale going one direction with very little variation or repetition of notes? Purcell singers tried this challenge and designed their own little pieces before hearing this short, beautifully simple melody by Hungarian composer Lajos Bárdos. In one downward scale movement, he captures the melancholy, beauty, and brevity that is late autumn.

Orpheus With His Lute

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Text by William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Orpheus was the great musician in Greek mythology who could entrance all of nature, even wild beasts, with the beauty of his singing and lute playing. Vaughan Williams, one of the most important English composers of the 20th century, later set the poem to this beautifully crafted melody that uses a simple three-note melodic motif: the interval of a third followed by a major second (also known as the “knight’s move”, as it imitates the direction of this chess piece). Architecture, like music, can also show unity through the use of repeated ideas, without the observer always consciously noticing how frequently the motif is used. Once aware of the knight’s move, Purcell members noted how this idea occurs in nearly every single measure of the piece—sometimes more than once. In the MYArts building, students have noticed how the motif of color blocks and stacked rectangles are used throughout the building and provide a sense of continuity and flow.

Catches, a comic type of round written for men's voices, were a popular form of entertainment from the late 16th century through about 1800. As they were not generally written for public performance, anyone listening might have been asked to join on a part.

The architecture of these catches involve three distinct and different designs that all fit together and complement each other, despite their differing melodic shapes and rhythms. We noticed how one part is active while two other parts are more static. In building design, this is known as “negative space.” We are attempting to make some of the structure of the piece visible through movement that shows the different characteristics of each part.

BRITTEN



This Little Babe

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

What good fortune that back in 1971, when director Carrel Pray named the choirs in the newly-formed Madison Boychoir, she chose Benjamin Britten as one of the composers to be so honored, for it would be hard to find a British composer—or any composer—who wrote so consistently and well for the unique sound of boys' voices.

One of Britten's most celebrated pieces to showcase this sound is *A Ceremony of Carols*, written on shipboard in 1942, as Britten was returning to England from America during World War II, drawn home by his patriotism and British identity. For this extended work, Britten chose texts from medieval English carols, Elizabethan poetry, and Gregorian chant.

The thrilling high point and most famous piece from the work is “This Little Babe,” based on a text by Robert Southwell (1561-1595), a Jesuit poet who defied Queen Elizabeth's ban on Catholic priests in England and was eventually captured and executed. The text is allegorical and ironic, with the helpless infant Jesus in battle with Satan at the gates of hell, which the Incarnation will launch. A martial, warlike melody, with a “trumpet alarm” in the penultimate verse is pressed relentlessly by a pounding accompaniment. The most ingenious aspect of the piece is its architecture. It is a canon (a

round like “Are You Sleeping?”) which increases from unison, to two and then three-parts, before a dazzling, rapid-fire climax.

**Sometimes I Feel Like a
Motherless Child (premiere)**

based on the spiritual
arr. R. Swiggum & Britten members

Most musicians function more like contractors than architects. They take a blueprint (musical score) designed by another architect (composer) and build it according to specifications prescribed. In this piece, we flipped that model and tried to build an original piece in a style that depends on self-expression: hip-hop.

Our basic building material was an old spiritual. Britten members learned to sing it by ear, noticing that (like some architecture) it has an asymmetrical shape, with an extra phrase stuck in, which prolongs the “long way from home” idea, delaying “home” in a melancholy way. We then explored all the metaphors in “motherless” and “long way” and “home” considering how we might enlarge the idea of the piece with our original spoken word art. Next we discussed what would make a good “hook”—a short repeated phrase that we invented both to unify the structure, but also to summarize it succinctly. Finally, we discussed the “approach”—the way the architect controls the way we enter a building and our first impression of it, which informed our decisions about the introduction.

This project was a big risk—we had no idea if it would work. But our process was rich and led to profound discussions about the architecture of our new piece, made from old material, and the challenge of being a creative artist, designing something never before heard.

HOLST



Exultate Justi in Domino (sung in Latin)

Lodovico Grossi da Viadana
(c.1560-1627)

*Rejoice in the Lord, you who are just!
Praise befits the upright.
Praise the Lord with the lyre!
Make melody to him on the ten-stringed harp!
Sing to him a new song;
Play skillfully with loud shouts of joy. (Psalm 33)*

Any art form is a way of knowing about something—the color of a sunrise, the patterns of a leaf, the chaos of a city street, or even anger or joy—and then finding a way to express it in a different medium, whether painted canvas, dance, or musical sounds. In the Renaissance, composers began to actually “paint” specific words of text with melodic figures that expressed not just their feeling but something more specific about their meaning.

In this motet from 1602, Viadana uses “word painting” on *chitarra* (harp) with its fancy flourishes, and in *psalterio decem chordarum* (on a ten-stringed harp) with its ascending and descending scales, like student exercises. *Vociferatione* (loud shouts) gets a bombastic, “vociferous” melody. The whole piece is a perfectly symmetrical ABA structure, with the energetic middle section framed by a dancelike opening in triple meter, which also rounds out the ending, like two strong pillars anchoring the front and back. Viadana was a Franciscan monk who held musical posts in large churches throughout Italy but whose influence was felt throughout Europe in the 16th century.

The Water is Wide

Traditional, arr. Swiggum, based on Zaninelli

Max Turner, viola

With Holst members, this old English folk song was “love at first sight.” Described by them as “tender” and “haunting” and “unlike any other song that Holst usually sings,” singers committed each week to speculating, like architects, how we might build a structure based on this melody. In other words, creating an arrangement, a process that most Holst members had little experience with. Because of its long, arching melody, the piece also gave us a chance to look at arches—Gothic arches, Islamic arches, and use of the arch as both a structural and aesthetic feature.

COMBINED CHOIRS



Plato's Take

(sung partly in Greek)

R. Swiggum & Holst members

But the boy, of all the wild animals, is hardest to handle.

–Plato (427-327 B.C.E.) Laws VII, 14

Essentially four lines of interlocking counterpoint, this piece is a study of (architecturally speaking) negative and positive space. Each voice part inhabits a different range, high to low (so they don't get in each other's space). They also take turns with rests and pitches, so when one part has a few beats of rest (negative space) another part "fills in" with their own notes.

Originally written for the inaugural Madison Boychoir Festival in 2010, today's version of the piece is quite different from the original, because the way we think about being a boy has changed. Where the piece used to be a wink toward stereotypes about boys (from no less than Plato), we now aim for a more nuanced, complex take (pun intended) on gender and identity. This conversation is a vital and supportive one in the MYC environment, giving us a chance to "deconstruct" Plato's Take, and build a brand new hip-hop inflected piece. Our creation, what you will hear today, includes our own new spoken word art, a new "hook", a new overall structure, and new decisions about the introduction and ending reflective of the way an architect shapes the experience of entering and exiting a structure. This process was difficult, but the conversations in rehearsal each week pushed deeper thinking about architecture, musical structure, and especially questions of identity and society's expectations.

LIQUID ARCHITECTURE

3:30 Sunday, December 11

Middleton Performing Arts Center

CHORALIERS

Lisa Kjentvet, conductor

Vincent Fuh, piano

CON GIOIA

Carrie Enstad and Marie McManama, conductors

Derek Hamersly, piano

CAPRICCIO

Lisa Kjentvet, conductor

Vincent Fuh, piano

CHORALIERS



Alleluia

William Boyce (1711-1779)

This joyful canon was composed by William Boyce, one of the great British composers of the 18th century. The text consists of the single word “Alleluia”, but the three melodic lines each have their own distinct character. As we practiced singing these lines in canon to create harmony, Choraliers considered architecturally significant buildings in Madison, focusing on three distinct features of our state capitol building (columns, arches and the dome) and how the orderly balance of these elements work in harmony to create a building of grandeur that marks the skyline of Madison.

Wind on the Hill

Victoria Ebel-Sabo (b. 1957)
Text by A.A. Milne (1882-1956)

Dawn Lawler, flute

Alan Alexander Milne is famous for his book *Winnie-the-Pooh* and the sequel *The House at Pooh Corner*. The text “Wind on the Hill” is taken from his publication of poems, *Now We are Six*, first published in 1927. The poem ponders the origin of the wind and is filled with childlike wonder and curiosity. Choraliers contemplated over the composer’s choice to set only two of the poem’s five stanzas, creating a piece in ABA, a form which is common in music, architecture and nature.

Mayim, Mayim (sung in Hebrew)

E. Amiran, arr. Valerie Shields

Dawn Lawler, flute; Amber Dolphin, violin

You will draw water with joy from the wells of redemption.

Mayim, Mayim (water, water) is one of the earliest and most popular Israeli folk dances. The music was composed by Emanuel Pugashov Ariman with lyrics from Isaiah 12:13, while the dance was created in 1937 for a festival to celebrate the discovery of water on a kibbutz (a rural communal settlement) after a seven-year search. Choraliers found the rhythms of this piece to be infectious and enjoyed exploring the idea of rhythm in architecture.

CON GIOIA



Ich will den Herrn loben
(sung in German)

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767)

Amber Dolphin, violin

*I will praise the Lord at all times;
His praise will forever be in my mouth (Psalm 34:1)*

Architects are given a broad list of functional necessities and must create something based on someone else's ideas. Composers often have the same job. How can a composer build a short piece of music that could potentially go on forever? How can a composer build a long piece of music using only a few words? Architects design patterns and formulas to create structures, while composers create melodies. We first looked at the basic building blocks of Telemann's canon and discovered that he uses slight variations in his rhythmic patterns, repeats and elongates important words, and uses unusually placed rests to seamlessly weave together four melodic lines. What sounds and looks simple at first becomes a complex structure when all the ideas come together.

Velvet Shoes

Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

Thompson's setting of this Elinor Wylie poem is brimming with architectural features. The material in the piano introduction, which reappears throughout, includes a rhythmic motive which signals a feeling of royalty or importance. We discovered that this stately introduction functions in a similar manner to the approach of a building. We also used the concept of arches in learning to shape soaring, rounded phrases. A master architect-composer, Thompson sets this poem with such intention we can imagine we are right there - inside of the piece.

Gesù Bambino

Pietro Yon (1886-1943)

Jessica Timman Schwefel, mezzo-soprano

Pietro Yon originally composed this melody as a duet for tenor and baritone. We performed this arrangement for mezzo-soprano soloist and choir with full orchestra as part of "A Madison Symphony Christmas." Our singers

learned that Frederick Martens used Yon's melody to write his carol, "When Blossoms Flowered 'Mid the Snows." This led us to a discussion around architects borrowing ideas from previously constructed buildings, most notably Frank Lloyd Wright and his vast influence and imitations.

One December, Bright and Clear

Catalonian Carol, arr. Wilberg

As previously noted, architects are often tasked with designing someone else's vision. A parallel exists for us in how we came to learn and perform this work this semester. This piece was part of the vision of the MSO Christmas concert, and we were tasked with bringing it to life with the orchestra in the beautiful Overture Center. The arranger designed and "built" this piece for precisely this type of occasion. His setting is bright and joyful, its strophic form is familiar and dependable, and the memorable melody sends us singing our way home. It was a joy to sing it last week for the MSO concerts, and we are delighted to share it with you today.

CAPRICCIO



Da Pacem Domine (sung in Latin)

Melchior Franck (c.1579-1639)

Give peace, O Lord, in our time.

Melchior Franck, a prolific German composer of the late Renaissance and early Baroque eras, ingeniously crafted a sophisticated sounding composition from a simple six-measure melody. Unlike traditional canons (rounds), this one is sung at the interval of a fourth, with the second and fourth parts singing the same melody but beginning four notes lower than the others. The singers explored how architects can similarly use the simplest material to create an interesting and well-crafted design.

Bel Piacere (from *Agrippina*)
(sung in Italian)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

It is a great pleasure to enjoy faithful love! It gives the heart contentment.

The splendor of beauty has little value if it does not come from a faithful heart.

Handel was a prolific composer of the Baroque period which is characterized by an elaborate musical style that mimics the ornate architecture of the period. Although he is best known for his oratorio *Messiah*, Handel first found success as an Italian opera composer. This aria, from Act III of his opera *Agrippina*, is sung in typical *da capo* form (ABA) and features lilting rhythms and shifting meter changes. It is sung by the character Poppea who has many admirers but she confesses her love to Ottone and sings of the great joys that come from faithful love.

Camino, Caminante
(sung in Spanish and English)

Stephen Hatfield (b. 1956)

El Thompson, cowbell; Ian Disjardin, shaker; Frankie Spielbauer, vibraslap

Originally written for the Miami Choral Society and inspired by the widely diverse demographics of Miami (listen for the disguised use of the name of the city which is broken down into syllables), Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield built this composition with four distinct themes. When the parts are superimposed on each other, a sense of polyrhythm is created. The interconnection of duple and triple time suggests the independent, interlocking movements of peoples and cultures in a big city. The fast pace of society (where different paths are opening and closing before anybody can keep track) is reflected in the text from the Spanish poet Antonio Machado (1875-1939): “Caminante, no hay camino. Se hace camino al andar.” (Traveler, there is no path. Paths are made by walking.)

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LIQUID ARCHITECTURE

7:30pm Sunday, December 11
Middleton Performing Arts Center

CANTILENA

Margaret Jenks, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

CANTABILE

Michael Ross, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

RAGAZZI

Michael Ross, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

CANTABILE AND RAGAZZI



Tha Thin Tha (premiered 2014)

Lisa Young

Kannakol is the art of performing vocal percussion syllables in South Indian Carnatic music. It is an incredibly complex and rich rhythmic system. Australian composer Lisa Young studied with masters of *kannakol* for many years and then began writing music that combined the spoken syllables with jazz-influenced melodies and harmonies. Young combines “blocks” of sung and spoken text to create a complicated sonic structure.

CANTILENA



Vanitas, Vanitatum

Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck (1591-1652)

This richly constructed canon contains a very short text: “Vanity, vanity, all is vanity.” Another way to translate it is, “Everything is impermanent. Nothing matters.” And yet, the text is not built with a slow, somber, simple text, or rhythm. The polyphonic four part texture and ornate melodic line seem to be in contrast with the grim text. We pondered this mystery wondering if there was a hidden message within the structure of the piece. (Material things don’t last, but music and art do!) Or, if the grimness of reality had to be housed within something really fancy to try and dress up the depressing message (like how a funeral home might try to bring some beauty to a hard time). We don’t have an answer, but have loved the soaring lines and the richly integrated polyphony.

**Wir eilen mit schwachen doch
emsigen Schritten (BWV 78)**
(sung in German)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Trace Johnson, cello

We hurry with faltering but eager footsteps to you, O Jesus, O Master. You faithfully look for the sick and straying. Ah hear, as we raise our voices to pray for help! May your gracious countenance give us joy!

In this duet from Cantata 78, we see how small motifs and melodic ideas can be used to construct an entire piece—much like the way legos, though small and uninteresting in shape, can be put together to construct something beautiful and interesting. Bach is a master of pairing text in a meaningful way with the music. Listen for running melismatic patterns to portray “hurrying,” a static pattern that feels “stuck” to show how we falter, short imploring and sighing melodic patterns that beg for help, and passages that seem to wander out of the given key tonality to show the “sick and straying.”

Heart, We Will Forget Him

James Q. Mulholland (b. 1936)
Text by Emily Dickenson

Sarah Gillespie, French Horn

These lines from Dickenson’s poem dwell on the irony of how in willing ourselves to forget, we remember. This conflict is built into the very structure of the piece—melodically and especially harmonically. The melody is at times simple and restrained and then quickly soars. The harmonic structure varies from unison singing to dense, dissonant structures as the brain tells the heart what it must do, but the heart can’t easily follow the brain’s advice. The idea of an ascending half step begins the piece in the horn and is used throughout in the vocal lines and the horn and captures the feeling of urgent pleading. This piece begins simply, but unfolds into a grand, dramatic gesture—much like the approach of our state capitol building is a simple hallway that leads to a stunning dome.

RAGAZZI



Si, tra i ceppi (from *Berenice*)
(sung in Italian)

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

*Yet even in chains and bonds, my faith will be resplendent.
No, not even Death itself will extinguish my fire.*

Handel's aria from a little-known opera (the 1731 premiere was a flop) has remained a favorite of singers since it was written. In typical 18th century style, we have added ornamentation the second time through the opening melody.

Washington

William Billings (1746-1800)

William Billings—Boston tanner, politician, and friend of Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere—is considered America's first “home-grown” composer. Although a contemporary of Mozart and Haydn, his music shows little of the refined elegance of European art music. Billings was completely self-taught, but his musical sense is always imaginative and bold, characteristic of the young American nation circa 1776. His writing shows a keen ear for the abilities and attitudes of the amateur American of the singing school tradition, yet the open harmonies, vigorous rhythms, and simple, direct expressions of the text give this music a strangely modern, fresh sound to our ears. [Program note by R. Swiggum]

I Will Howl

Timothy Takach (b. 1978)

Trace Johson, cello

*Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?
Green glass, goblin, why do you stare at them?
Give them me.
No.
Give them me. Give them me.
No.
Then I will howl all night in the reeds,
Lie in the mud and howl for them.
Goblin, why do you love them so?*

*They are better than stars or water,
Better than voices of winds that sing,
Better than any man's fair daughter,
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.
Hush, I stole them out of the moon.
No.
I will howl in a deep lagoon
For your green glass beads, I love them so.
Give them me. Give them.
No.
—Harold Monro (1879–1932)*

Minnesota-based composer Takach sets this intriguing poem, called “Overheard on a Salt Marsh,” in an equally intriguing musical fashion. Takach uses an ever-changing meter to keep the listener “on edge,” emphasizing conflict between goblin and nymph. The text “give them me” is set in a particularly insistent rhythmic style, matching the insistent tone of the text. The poem itself was a staple of children’s nighttime reading in early 20th century England. Monro’s fantastical poetic world is easily understood but hides larger themes of desire and greed.

CANTABILE



Come, Shepherd Swains

John Wilbye (1574-1638)

One of the famous British composers during the era of the madrigal, Wilbye uses typical compositional techniques like “text-painting” (where the music literally represents itself; for example, a rising melody on the word “pleasant”) and moves between homophonic (many lines at the same time) and polyphonic (many lines at different times) textures.

Nochevála túchka zolotáya
(sung in Russian)

Nikolay Rimsky-Korsakov (1844-1908)

*Once upon a time, a golden cloud on the bosom of a cliff was
sleeping,
By sunrise it, with a breeze, was sweeping, gaily playing with its
azure shroud.
But some traces of the cloud were seeping into the craggy wrinkles.
In the desert, the cliff stood and mused without comfort, deeply
thinking, desperately weeping. — M. Lermontov (1814-1841)*

Rimsky-Korsakov was a member of the group of Russian composers known as “The Five.” Though best known for his large-scale works like *Scheherazade* and the orchestra interlude *The Flight of the Bumblebee* from his 1899 opera *The Tale of Tsar Sultan*, the composer also set art songs, sacred choral works, and some secular works, like this setting of a famous Russian poem.

dominic has a doll

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

*dominic has
a doll wired to the radiator of his
ZOOM DOOM
icecoalwood truck a
wistful little
clown
whom somebody buried
upside down in an ashbarrel so
of course dominic
took him
home
& mrs dominic washed his sweet
dirty
face & mended
his bright torn trousers (quite as if he were really her &
she but) & so
that's how dominic has a doll
& every now & then my
wonderful
friend dominic depaola
gives me a most tremendous hug
knowing
i feel
that
we & worlds*

*are
less alive
than dolls &
dream*
—E.E. Cummings

Persichetti's setting of E.E. Cummings' poem about the wistful memory of childhood is based on several small music ideas, or motifs: one focused on the intervals of the perfect fifth and major/minor third and a recurring rhythmic motif that refers to the poem's namesake, Dominic. These small musical building blocks work like those in the MYArts building (the rhythm of the outside panels, the olive lights, and more) to remind us that large works are often "built" from small ideas.

COMBINED CHOIRS



Both of our final pieces tonight were sung just last week with the Madison Symphony Orchestra as part of their annual Christmas concerts in Overture Hall.

Angel Tidings

John Rutter (b. 1945)
Moravian carol tune, text is by the composer

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

Arranged by Mack Wilberg
(b. 1955)
Melody from Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music (1813)

This well-known arrangement by Mack Wilberg (of Mormon Tabernacle Choir fame) combines the shape-note melody with a 1758 hymn text written by Robert Robinson. Wilberg weaves the simple melody into an ever-intensifying tapestry of key changes and expanding choral texture.

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To learn more, visit madisonyouthchoirs.org/support/legacy
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 Minta Mosman Bock
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