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PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

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 Ashu Pal



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 Choraliers, Con Gioia, Capriccio

15 4:00pm | Sunday, May 13, 2018
 Purcell, Britten, Holst, and Ragazzi

25 7:00pm | Sunday, May 13, 2018
 Cantilena, Ragazzi, Cantabile

32 Our Graduating Seniors

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Andrew Johnson.....	Accompanist
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Jess Salek.....	Accompanist
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Margaret Stansfield.....	Instructor
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We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of the 540 donors who responded to a singer's It's MYChoir appeal this spring. Over \$35,000 was raised through this campaign which encourages participants to share their MYC story with friends and family. Because tuition alone covers less than half the total cost of our program, the fundraising efforts of our singers, staff, and board are key to keeping MYC financially healthy and accessible to all.

Anonymous (28)	Dean and Deanne Bremer	Sergey Denisov
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 April 18, 2018. We regret any errors
 or omissions—please contact the MYC
 office with your corrections*

ABOUT THESE CONCERTS



**WHAT'S SO
 GREAT ABOUT
 SWITZERLAND?**

**i DON'T KNOW,
 BUT THEIR FLAG IS
 A BIG PLUS!**

Many of our choirs “unpacked” this joke during rehearsals this spring, uncovering the assumptions that make the joke “work.” This semester, MYC singers explored the unexpected ways that elements of humor, from irony and incongruity to improvisation and timing, are reflected in a wide variety of musical compositions. We’ve learned that music, like humor, is a kind of language, operating with its own sense of logic, patterns, and conventions that composers can twist to surprise us and take our musical journeys to new places.

Today’s concerts are full of music that surprises, twists, challenges, and entertains. Most of it is not funny in the same way as verbal humor; musical surprise can be humorous, sad, or inspiring. Thanks to all of our MYC families and singers for exploring what is “Seriously Funny” this semester.



Please Note

Every MYC concert is recorded, and each concert represents the extraordinary effort and hard work of our young musicians. We want them to remember their performance for its artistry, not its interruptions.

Please silence or turn 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.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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Scott Gendel, piano

CON GIOIA

Lisa Shimon, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano
Naomi Fritz, choir intern

CAPRICCIO

Lisa Kjentvet, conductor
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2018–19 Season Madison Bach Musicians



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Saturday, May 19, 2018

1:00 pm – Harp Ensemble, Sinfonietta, Concert Orchestra
 4:00 pm – Percussion Ensemble & Philharmonia Orchestra



Sunday, May 20, 2018

2:00 pm – Opus One & Youth Orchestra
 Mills Concert Hall



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Madison Boychoir, 1973

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In July 2003, Madison Youth Choirs (MYC) was created through the merger of the Madison Boychoir and Madison Children's Choir, combining nearly 50 years of service to young people in our community. Since 2003, participation in MYC's choral programs has more than doubled, and a growing scholarship fund has ensured that every child, regardless of financial ability, has the opportunity to add his or her voice to the choir.

With a rich, historic past and a bright, expanding future, Madison Youth Choirs is thrilled to offer an opportunity for our supporters to help assure the sustainability of the choirs for years to come. Anyone who chooses to make MYC the beneficiary of a planned gift, regardless of the amount, is eligible to be an honored member of the **Madison Youth Choirs Legacy Society**.

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To find out more about the MYC Legacy Society, please contact Nicole Sparacino at nicole@madisonyouthchoirs.org or visit madisonyouthchoirs.org/support/legacy



Madison Children's Choir, 2001

CHORALIERS



Bee! I'm Expecting You

Emma Lou Diemer (b. 1927)

*Bee! I'm expecting you!
Was saying Yesterday
To Somebody you know
That you were due –*

*The Frogs got Home last Week –
Are settled, and at work –
Birds, mostly back –
The Clover warm and thick –*

*You'll get my Letter by
The seventeenth; Reply
Or better, be with me –
Yours, Fly.*

—Emily Dickinson (1830–1886)

Diemer's whimsical setting of Dickinson's poem, written in the form of a letter, is filled with musical surprises that delight the listener. The main motive imitates the buzzing of the bee and is heard in the piano accompaniment from the outset and during each interlude. This bee motive exemplifies musical humor and introduces the most striking characteristics of the piece—dissonance, metric shifts, and harmonic shifts that mimic the restlessness of a bee or fly as it darts around in the air. The abrupt ending with its unresolved cadence purposefully models the way a good joke teller delivers a punch line—with expert timing.

A Menagerie of Songs

Carolyn Jennings (b. 1936)

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Bandicoot | 5. Whale (Aqua Blues) |
| 2. Giraffes | 6. Rhinoceros |
| 3. Penguin | 7. Panda |
| 4. Sloth | |

A Menagerie of Songs is a set of seven songs by composer Carolyn Jennings, Professor Emerita of Music at St. Olaf College where she taught for many years and served as Chair of the Music Department and Associate Dean for the Fine Arts. These delightful pieces are settings of poems by Maryann Hoberman from her book entitled *The Raucous Auk: A Menagerie of Poems*. Hoberman's humorous collection of poems about animals is in itself full of wit and humor, marked by sharp observation, straight-faced nonsense, and melodic turns and surprises. As we studied each piece, the Choraliers enjoyed unpacking the many ways the composer created musical humor through the creative use of articulation, dynamics, musical style, texture, tempo, and text painting.





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CON GIOIA



V and I (from *The Catch Club or Merry Companions*) Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Small group: Ava Bachhuber, Lily Fellenz, Eleanor Byrnes, Alexandra Denisova
 Purcell wrote over 50 catches, secular rounds that ranged from everyday 17th century topics like love and drink to simple plays on words, as in this piece. “When V and I” refers to the Roman numerals, but also describes encounters between “V” and the speaker. Each line describes their meetings as resulting in a mathematical solution. The clever words and the unexpected melodic movement tickle our musical imaginations, and the intervals in the melody also bring us to the numerals in the text (a leap of a 6th leads to the number 6, a 4th to the number 4, and a unison to 1).

The Fate of Gilbert Gim Margaret Drynan (1915–1999)

Sometimes, the cleverness of a piece of music is in the way it is interpreted, either through markings in the music or with the ensemble and director. Our singers collaborated to find ways to push and pull the phrases in the music for the most dramatic effect, with some very clever results. Think of it as a well-told ghost story around the campfire. Hopefully, in our telling you will be able feel the urgency of Gilbert, and see the jaws of the beast open wide.

The Cabbage-Tree Hat Australian folk song
 Arranged by Donald Patriquin (b. 1938)
 Oliver Cardona, oboe

The unlikely subject of the author’s love, his cabbage tree hat, is only the beginning of the humor of this piece. Cabbage tree hats were certainly a necessary item for Australian settlers in the 1800s, but the composer of this song speaks to his hat as a beloved family member who approaches his final resting place. Patriquin skillfully arranged this folk song to surprise us with frequent rhythmic changes and whimsical harmonies, not to mention a capricious oboe line that flits from melody note to musical ‘laughter’, sometimes grabbing everyone’s attention like a class clown.



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CAPRICCIO



Papageno-Papagena Duet (from *The Magic Flute*)
(sung in German) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

Papageno: Pa-Pa-Papagena!
Papagena: Pa-Pa-Papageno!
Papageno: Have you to me only been given?
Papagena: Only to you have I been given.
Papageno: Then you will be my dear little wife!
Papagena: I will be your heart's little darling!
Papageno: My dear little wife!
Papageno and Papagena: What a joy it will be when the gods grace us,
and bestow our love with children, such dear little children!
Papageno: First a little Papageno!
Papagena: Then a little Papagena!
Papageno: Then another Papageno!
Papagena: Then another Papagena...
Papageno and Papagena: It is the greatest joy when parents are blessed with
many Papagenos/Papagenas.

Mozart's *The Magic Flute* is a widely cherished comic opera and was first performed in Vienna in 1791, just a few months before Mozart died. Filled with magical instruments, mythological characters, and set in the strangeness and wonder of ancient Egypt, the opera was composed not for nobility but for the general public whose response was one of immediate success. Mozart's music effectively combines elements of comedy and drama with melodies designed for popular appeal.

This duet is sung in the Act II finale of the opera. Papageno (altos), having lost Papagena (sopranos) in the evil Sarastro's castle, sits alone in the garden and prepares to take his life to end his sorrows. Three spirits appear, urging him to once again play his magic bells and look around. Much to his surprise and joy, he sees his beloved Papagena. Joyfully united, the two sing of their eternal happiness, love, and their many future children.

Ich jauchze, ich lache (from BWV 15) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
(sung in German)

I shout for joy, I laugh, I shout resoundingly for joy.
You mourn with sighs; you weep over the same cause:
the sudden destruction of your power distresses you.
To me such ruin has brought great joy,
since in future death, devil and sin will be mocked.

This lovely duet from Bach's cantata *Denn du wirst meine Seele nicht in der Holle lassen* is a lesson in Baroque polyphony and a prime example of text painting, a compositional technique where the sound of the music reflects the literal meaning

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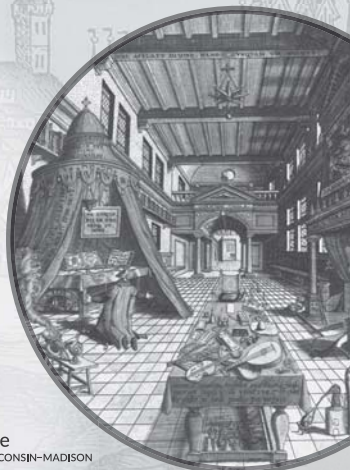
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Illustrations: Heinrich Khunrath, *Amphitheatrum sapientiae aeternae* (Hamburg: s.n., 1595), and Schedel, Hartmann, n.d. *Liber Chronicarum* 1493 Facsimile - Nuremberg Chronicle (Latin Edition).

of the words. Two masterfully crafted melodies are woven together to represent two incongruous ideas, laughing at death and mourning. The subject is a lilting melody built on thirds to represent shouting and laughing for joy. The descending chromatic countersubject exemplifies mourning with musical sighs, while creating a series of tritones, known as the devil's interval. Additional text painting is heard in the major and minor passages and the short, separated notes on *verlacht*, the laughing motive.

J'entends le Moulin
 (sung in French)

French folk song
 Arranged by Donald Patriquin

*I hear the millwheel tique tique taque.
 My father is having a house built.
 It is being built with three gables.
 There are three carpenters building it.
 The youngest is my darling.*

*What do you have in your apron?
 It's a pie made of three pigeons.
 Let's sit down and eat it.
 While sitting down they all lept up,
 Causing the sea and fish to tremble,
 And the stones on the bottom of the sea.*

The melody for this lively French-Canadian folk song may have its origins in France, where it was known as *Mon Père a Fait Batir Maison*. The refrain features the use of onomatopoeia with the rhythmic and repetitive 'tique, tique, taque' that imitates the sound of the windmill. The text appears at times to be illogical and nonsensical due to its "game of rhymes" in which the final syllables of each line all rhyme with "tends" of "J'entends." The rapidly articulated text combined with the percussion instruments and virtuoso piano accompaniment creates a joyful frenzy to the point of being satirical.

COMBINED CHOIRS



Funiculi, Funicula
 (sung in Italian and English)

Luigi Denza (1846–1922)

Some think the world is made for fun and frolic...and so do I!

The words to "Funiculi, Funicula" were written by journalist Peppino Turco and set to music by Denza in 1880, for the opening of the first funicular railway on Mt. Vesuvius. They told the story of a young man who compared his love to a volcano and invited her on a romantic trip to the summit on the funicular. After the song became wildly popular in Italy and abroad, the English lyrics were written by Edward Oxenford, a lyricist and translator of librettos and bear little resemblance to the original.

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Caitlin McLimans (1 year) will attend UW-Whitewater. Her favorite MYC memory is performing with the MSO in Overture Hall.

Rowen Pierick (2 years) remembers his first MSO concert fondly as well as the 2015 school tours, when he and his sister, who were both part of MYC, sang *Ach weh des Leiden* on the bus, cutting through the chaos of chatter and influencing everyone else on the bus to join.

Christian Rickman (3 years) remembers his first time walking onto the Overture Hall stage and being floored by the beauty and emotion of what they were doing. He'll attend York University in Toronto to study music and philosophy.

Jose Rojas (2 years) is thankful for his time in MYC and is looking forward to this summer's Scotland trip.

Stella Sanford (8.5 years) remembers playing "Mike Says," singing *Love is a Rain of Diamonds* in a circle, watching the infamous break-dancing video, and meeting that Scottish one-eyed dog. She'll attend UW-Stevens Point this fall.

Kirsten Schoff (6 years) will attend University of Minnesota-Twin Cities this fall. Her favorite MYC memories include singing *Hallelujah* at MSO concerts, school tours, and singing *Sisters, Now Our Meeting is Over* at the end of rehearsals.

Lydia Shaw (6.5 years) will attend Skidmore College this fall. He favorite MYC memories singing *Niska Banja* in Scotland, singing for the Dalai Lama, and singing in our "The Little Prince" concert.

Ellie Taylor (10 years) remembers singing with Lydia and Breanna, singing in *Carmen*, and the MSO concerts. She'll attend Harvard this fall.

Rose Torti (6.5 years) fondly remembers singing *One Voice* in Scotland. She'll attend Luther College this fall.

Savon Vanderbloemen (6 years) will take a gap year and then plans to study art and graphic design. They fondly remember singing outside in Scotland.

Drew White (9.5 years) will attend Carthage College this fall. They value learning to love music, working on projects with Madison Opera, and meeting their best friends in MYC.

Peter Woods (10 years) has too many memories to list, but they include *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, school tours, singing *Loch Lomond* to send-off the 2016 Scotland tour singers, *House at Pooh Corner*, and so many other memories MYC has given to him (10 years) and his family (20 years!).

Madison Youth Choirs CD Order Form

Seriously Funny

May 13, 2018 • First Congregational Church

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MADISON
YOUTH CHOIRS

SERIOUSLY FUNNY

4:00p.m. Sunday, May 13
First Congregational Church



PURCELL

Margaret Jenks, conductor
Andrew Johnson, piano
Eliav Goldman, choir intern

BRITTEN

Randal Swiggum, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

HOLST

Margaret Jenks and Randal Swiggum, conductors

MADISON BOYCHOIR



Sumer is icumen in (Summer has come in)
(sung in Middle English)

Anonymous, c.1250

<i>Sumer is icumen in, Lhude sing cuccu! Groweþ sed and bloweþ med And springþ þe woode nu, Sing cuccu! Awe bleteþ after lomb, Lhouþ after calve cu. Bulluc stertep, bucke vertep, Murie sing cuccu! Cuccu, cuccu, wel singes þu cuccu; Ne swik þu nauer nu.</i>	<i>Summer has come in, Loudly sing, Cuckoo! The seed grows and the meadow blooms And the wood springs anew, Sing, Cuckoo! The ewe bleats after the lamb The cow lows after the calf. The bullock leaps, the buck farts, Merrily sing, Cuckoo! Cuckoo, cuckoo, well you sing, cuckoo! Don't ever you stop now.</i>
--	---

Scatological humor (or, as Britten boys refer to it: “potty humor”) did not originate with middle school boys, nor Mozart (although he was notorious for it). But it has been around at least since this piece, the most famous extant medieval song, known as the “Reading Rota” (it was probably composed in Reading, England and “rota” is the word for “wheel” or “round”). Its beautifully illuminated manuscript is on display in the British Museum in London. Its text is in Middle English—some words are recognizable to us modern English speakers.

Warm weather was slow to come to Wisconsin this year. But imagine the 13th century—just surviving the winter, where food was scarce, life was hard, and it was cold inside and out. The anonymous poet seems to revel in every detail of nature around him coming to life (including some details we wouldn’t even notice). It is a buoyant celebration of life—with all creation shouting loudly that summer is here: the cuckoo, the lowing cow and snorting, leaping bull, and of course, the flatulent stag.

PURCELL



V and I (from *The Catch Club* or *Merry Companions*)

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

Nathaniel Johnson, violin

Many jokes are built on a “double meaning.” In order to really get it, the listener needs to be able to see the surface, as well as the hidden meaning. In the late 1600s, catches (rounds) were written as clever entertainment, using jokes that were sometimes bawdy, sometimes political and, in this case, mathematical. Listen to the riveting tale of two characters “V” and “I” as they meet up under different circumstances (V and I, I and V, and I minus V). Alternatively, our friends “V” and “I”

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**AUDIO FOR THE
ARTS**

OUR GRADUATING SENIORS



Andrew Carran (8 years) will attend Madison College this fall. He remembers the 2014 Scotland tour and dancing backstage at the MSO concerts.

Michael Egle (4.5 years) remembers performing at the Overture Center with MSO. He'll attend Iowa State University this fall.

Lillie Elling (2 years) will attend the University of Illinois-Chicago this fall. Her favorite MYC memory harkens back to when her older brother was in our boychoirs; when she would attend his concerts and watch as the choirs he was in took on more challenging music. She knew then she wanted to be part of this organization.

Liam Forrest (9.5 years) plans to continue singing in college, even though he won't be majoring in music. His favorite MYC memory is touring Scotland in 2014 and singing in such beautiful spaces.

Morgan Gates (4 years) will attend Boston Conservatory this fall. She fondly remembers the 2016 tour to Scotland.

Marcus Graham (7 years) will attend UW-Madison this fall. His favorite MYC memory is performing *The Snow Goose*, not only because of the wonderful narration, but also because of the close connection between the music and the story.

Lauren Hutter (5.5 years) will attend the University of Oregon this fall. One of her favorite MYC memories was the off stage "dance-off" during the holiday concerts at the Overture Center.

Christopher Kjentvet (6.5 years) fondly remembers the 2014 Scotland tour and getting the opportunity to experience different cultures as well as performing at the Overture Center for the Arts. He'll attend UW-Eau Claire this fall.

Aimee Kujak (3 years) will study music therapy at University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Her favorite MYC memories include singing with Sonntag at the High Noon Saloon, singing *Sisters, Now Our Meeting is Over* at the end of rehearsals, and our group "pep talk" before our final concert in Scotland.

Henry Malueg (8 years) remembers Scotland, *The Snow Goose*, singing *Griffelkin* with Purcell, and the meaningful relationships he's made in his time with MYC. He'll attend MATC this fall and then plans to take part in the Disney College program.

Breanna McClarey (9.5 years) will first travel to Ghana this summer to volunteer and then attend Northeastern University (Boston) this fall. Her favorite memory is the 2016 Scotland trip.

can be seen as Roman numerals and now a math equation unfolds rather than a story of chance encounter. Interestingly, the answer to each mathematical equation is not only in the text, but also hidden intervallically in the pitches that lead to the numerical answer (a leap of a 6th leads to the number 6, a 4th to the number 4, and a unison to 1).

Modern Major-General

(from *The Pirates of Penzance*, 1879)

Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900)

William S. Gilbert (1836–1911)

Major General Stanley sings this patter song at the end of Act I in this comic opera, which is filled with random, impossible, absurd, useless, and incongruous things that make General Stanley a shining example of the best the modern British military has to offer. His ironic bravado, the political digs and the internal poke at another Gilbert and Sullivan opera, *H.M.S. Pinafore*, have delighted audiences for over 150 years. While the text is hilarious, the breakneck-speed tempo also adds comic value. The boys enjoyed uncovering the jokes, challenging themselves to understand all (or most) of the numerous references and, of course, the technical fun of making words and notes pour so quickly from their mouths. While some recognized the famous tune from recent cinematic culture, it was fun to discover that it had a history dating back well before the "minions" made it popular.

Weevily Wheat

American play-party song

Arranged by Dan Krunnfusz

Nathaniel Johnson, fiddle

"Weevily Wheat" is an example of an American folk song in the play-party tradition. Play-party songs were historically songs that teens would sing for entertainment and courting. The songs would often evolve with new verses being added on the spot—like 19th century "freestyling"—a game that required humor and a quick wit. In the spirit of the play-party tradition, we "played" in Purcell by adding verses and making up our own versions of "Weevily Wheat," based on the traditional rhythm, melody and rhyme scheme. Our performance represents not only musical spontaneity of people many generations ago, but the play and imagination of the boys in the Purcell choir. Enjoy this unique one-time performance and continue the fun by making up more verses on your next long car ride!

BRITTEN



Gloria Tibi (From *Mass*)
(sung in Latin)

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

Nathaniel Johnson, tenor

*Glory to thee, glory.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.
We praise Thee. We adore Thee. We glorify Thee. We bless Thee!
Glory to the Father! Glory to the Son.
And to the Holy Ghost.*

This semester we learned the word *incongruous*—two things juxtaposed that don’t normally fit together, a feature of many jokes and visual humor. Incongruity in the arts isn’t always funny though—sometimes it’s just eclectic and diverse for powerful effect.

Leonard Bernstein, whose 100th birthday is being celebrated musically all across the globe, was famously eclectic, both in his career choices and in his composing style. Bernstein was not only a composer of Broadway musicals like *West Side Story* and *Candide*, but also four symphonies, two operas, and a huge number of other pieces. His *Mass*, written in 1971 for the opening of the Kennedy Center, was a sprawling, expansive theatre piece combining symphony orchestra, chorus, boychoir, blues and gospel, actors, dancers, a rock band, and even a marching band. “Gloria Tibi,” which borrows text from the Roman Catholic Mass, is a jubilant dance in 5/8 meter, which plays on the contrast between a dramatic tenor solo and the bright sound of boys’ voices.

The Plough Boy

Traditional
Arranged by Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

In our thirteen-year concert tradition of singing a piece by our namesake, we have often sung a folk song arrangement by Benjamin Britten. There are literally dozens of these, mostly from the British Isles, which Britten arranged imaginatively for solo voice and piano. “The Plough Boy,” properly speaking, is not a folk song, but was written by William Shields (1748–1829) for his opera *The Farmer* in 1787.

In Britten’s setting, the piece is a series of inside jokes, puns, and musical humor which we spent the semester uncovering. The first joke is in the piano introduction, where the right hand plays a jaunty “whistling” melody (as described in the text). Britten’s dynamic indications (loud and soft) mirror the trajectory of the boy’s aspirations, from *pianissimo* (for a boy very low on the social scale) to *fortissimo* (for a wealthy member of Parliament). The Britten boys took special delight in discovering all the puns in the text, most of which only work when sung aloud. For example, in describing himself as a (necessarily) corrupt politician, selling votes, the boy explains “when all his ‘ayes’ are sold off, then he’ll sell his ‘noes’.”

HOLST



Il est bel et bon
(sung in French)

Pierre Passereau (fl. 1509–1547)

*“He is handsome and fine, my husband is.”
There were two gossiping women in the village,
Saying one to the other, do you have a good husband?
“He doesn’t scold me, or beat me either.
He does the housework, he feeds the chickens,
And I just enjoy myself.”*

flowers they will give the queen in a one-upsmanship that becomes more and more dissonant until the simple homophonic ending reveals its beauty. In “Rustics and Fishermen,” the tenors and basses present a contrast with their portrayal of the gifts they will bring from their simple country lives; their excitement is intimately portrayed by the forward-leaning rhythm. In the second movement (sung last today), Time’s partner, Concord (peace) is revealed, and the romantic and intertwined relationship between the two is noted.

This summer, members of
PURCELL, BRITTEN, HOLST, AND RAGAZZI
will take flight on an amazing opportunity for musical
and personal growth at a summit of incredible
young artists from across the globe at the
ABERDEEN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF YOUTH ARTS
in Aberdeen, Scotland.

We want this experience to be within reach of all of our
students, including those whose families face financial
challenges, who have dreamed of performing on a
world class stage but who would not be able to travel
internationally without a tour scholarship.

Recognizing the great value of MYC’s past experiences
in Aberdeen, where we have performed with youth
ensembles from Indonesia, Norway, Ghana, and beyond,
a generous anonymous donor made a wonderful offer to
**double every dollar donated to the 2018 MYC Scotland Tour
Scholarship fund, up to a total of \$10,000.**

You can help us reach the \$10,000 challenge by
making a secure online donation at madisonyouthchoirs.org
or sending a check to the MYC office and designating
“Scotland Tour Scholarship Fund” in the memo line. Many
thanks to all who have generously donated to this project!

We invite all to join us for the FREE Scotland Tour Send-Off
Concert at 7:00pm on Tuesday, July 24, 2018 at Good Shepherd
Lutheran Church, 5701 Raymond Road, Madison.

Handel originally composed this lively duet in 1741, scoring it as a piece of light chamber music for two sopranos and continuo. A year later he “stole” it from himself and reworked it as a four-part chorus for his new oratorio *Messiah*. You may recognize its distinctive melodies as the more familiar “For Unto Us a Child is Born.”

Program notes by Randal Swiggum.

This Sky Falls

Joycelyn Hagen (b.1980)

Dawn Lawler, flute; Eric Miller, cello

Minnesota-based composer Jocelyn Hagen’s work is the third movement from her multi-movement choral work *Flight*. The entire work features varied depictions of the act of taking flight, with text by contemporary poets. This movement has a simple repeated musical idea that evokes a ballad; a contrast to the complexity of images found in the poem.

Svatba

(sung in Bulgarian)

Traditional Bulgarian

Arranged by H. R Todorov

*A great dark fog is gathering, Stoiane.
It wasn’t; it wasn’t a great dark fog,
but it was very much a sad Boyar wedding.
Ahead of the wedding, a well-fed horse was leading.
On the horse was a young maiden; on her head a red kerchief fluttered.*

This traditional Bulgarian wedding song, sung in a hard-voice style, is often performed by the amazing Bulgarian women’s choir Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares.

CANTABILE AND RAGAZZI



Choral Dances from *Gloriana*

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

- (I.) Time
- (IV.) Country Girls
- (V.) Rustics and Fishermen
- (II.) Concord

Although *Gloriana* was Britten’s least successful opera, these “choral dances” have become a beloved part of the choral canon. Commissioned in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the opera is set in the time of Queen Elizabeth I, the “Gloriana” referenced in the title of the opera.

These pieces are pure Elizabethan allegory: in the opening movement, Time is literally portrayed by a virile young man, in sharp contrast with the typical image of time as a “bearded ancient with a scythe.” The fourth movement, “Country Girls,” is a humorous contest of sorts between the sopranos and altos, each naming beautiful

*Really you have to laugh
to hear the cries of the chicks and hens:
Co, co, co, co, dae, little flirt, what’s this?
He is handsome and fine, my husband is.”*

Probably the most famous example of a 16th century *chanson*, this sassy piece of 1543 is funny in three different ways. First, its quick tempo (because we know that, at least in music, fast is funny). Second, is its clever onomatopoeic clucking on the word “bon” (good). Finally, is its story, which would have been considered a hilarious topical joke in its day: the young, pretty wife saddled with a dotty old husband who, in this case, does all the housework while she “takes her pleasure.” Our modern sensibilities are dismayed by this text, but this trope was not only hugely popular in its time and place, it was funny because it was subversive: in a society where women are essentially the property of their husband, a wife who inverts social roles and is “playing around” behind her husband’s back is truly humorous. It is innuendo and musical “winks” that signal the wife’s marital infidelities: the clucking sounds like “cocu” (cuckold).

Hopkinton

William Billings (1746–1800)

*Lo! He cometh!
Countless trumpets blow before the bloody sign [flag].
Midst ten thousand saints and angels, see the Crucified shine!
Hallelujah! Welcome, welcome bleeding Lamb!*

One of the most wonderful things about singing historical repertoire is the “time travel” it affords—experiencing another era, or culture, and its way of seeing the world. Hopkinton did this for Holst in several ways. Its composer, William Billings was a Boston tanner, politician, and friend of Revolutionary War hero Paul Revere. He 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 and vigorous rhythms give this music a strangely modern, fresh sound to our ears.

Even among Billings’ unusual pieces, though, this one is uniquely weird and wonderful. A “throne room” scene (we compared to the finale of *Star Wars: Episode IV – A New Hope*), the picture is of the crucified Christ, now risen and ascending to a throne in cosmic glory, attended by saints and angels. Billings’ details are exquisite: low voices at the beginning suggest a stately procession of drums, marching feet, and trombones which are overtaken by trumpets and fifes (sopranos and altos). We noticed that Billings also creates the feeling of “ten thousand” singing by setting “Hallelujah, welcome bleeding Lamb” with staggered vocal entrances.

BRITTEN AND HOLST with RAGAZZI



Birdsong

Heather Masse
Arranged by Randal Swiggum

Humor is not always funny or slapstick—sometimes it’s just a sense of delight, whimsy, or a way of seeing things that’s “good humored.” The lyrics of this song include birds and flowers, which perhaps generate some stereotypic images of what the song is likely about. But the song surprises—it’s not really what we expect, and conveys a profound message of self-reflection. In other words, it’s not really about birds or flowers at all. At this year’s Madison Boychoir Festival (for which this arrangement was created) the boys were challenged to come up with their idea of a more apt title, and they did not disappoint. A few of their ideas: *Nature’s Lessons*; *A Forest of Hope*; *Knowing Nature*; *Open to Everything*; and *I’d Like to Be*.



Presenting

THE CARREL PRAY MUSIC EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR 2018:

Patty Schlafer



RAGAZZI



I Will Howl

Timothy Takach (b. 1978)
Eric Miller, cello

Minnesota-based composer Takach sets this intriguing poem, called *Overheard on a Salt Marsh*, in an equally intriguing musical fashion. Takach uses 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. The fantastical world conjured by Monro is easily understood but hides larger themes of desire and greed.

RAGAZZI



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Fugue for Tindhorns (from *Guys and Dolls*)

Frank Loesser (1910–1969)

Frank Loesser was one of our most successful musical theater and Tin Pan Alley composers, with shows such as *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *The Most Happy Fella*, and songs like “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” and “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?” part of his large compositional library. His most popular musical, *Guys and Dolls* opens (after a pantomimed street scene played out during the overture) with three “wise guys” singing about the perils of placing a bet on the next horse race. Like a traditional fugue, Loesser’s tune has a main melody (the subject) followed by a secondary melody (the countersubject) that gets thrown from voice to voice.

CANTABILE



sam was a man

Vincent Persichetti (1915–1987)

Both E. E. Cummings’s brilliant poem and Persichetti’s effective composition offer more than immediately meets the eye (or ear). The titular Sam was a complicated person—with room in his heart for “the devil” and “his angels,” who was “stout” and “rugged” and “slick”...and more. Persichetti matches the poem by using what on first hearing seems to be a simple three-note motif, heard first in the piano, but upon further study reveals jazz-inspired melody and harmony, rhythms that look simple on the page but sound complex, and much more.

No, di voi non vo’ fidarmi (sung in Italian)

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

*No, I will never trust you, blind Love, you cruel man!
You are too much a liar and a flattering god!*

To really appreciate the genius of this duet, you should know that one can “turn” by physically moving, but a “turn” is also a musical move of notes that go up and then down, creating the shape of a turn—were you to connect the musical dots. Musical turns are generally fast and often used as ornaments, but this duet is a series of musical turns that go back and forth between the parts and then in parallel motion together. All the while, the voices are singing the word “turn” to direct Hymen, the god of marriage, to look upon Theseus and Hippolyta, the newly married couple, and bless them. After the musical turn, the parts move back and forth—like they are chasing each other—while singing, “And catching, catching...” While this section isn’t exactly a musical “catch” (which is a round), the parts definitely follow each other in a round (or catch)-like way (melodically and rhythmically). Finally, the fast tempo, along with the high tessitura and quick turns add elements of whimsy and delight.

My Funny Valentine (from *Babes in Arms*) Richard Rodgers (1902–1979)
 Lyrics by Lorenz Hart (1895–1943)
 Arranged by Randal Swiggum

Though originally a show tune from a 1937 musical, “My Funny Valentine” became a jazz standard, covered by over 600 artists, including Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Chet Baker, and Sarah Vaughan. It was not selected for the word “funny” in the title, but because it captures a certain type of humor in a beautifully subtle way: Irony. It is a love song, but it is in a minor key. The melody on its own seems heavy and even melancholy, which pushes against the text “My funny valentine, sweet comic valentine.”

It is a love song, but rather than a list of over-the-top wonderful attributes, it lists flaws. It is hard to imagine a time when the phrase “My funny valentine” didn’t exist, but even the title is incongruous. My sweet, dear, lovely, charming, etc...could all proceed the word “valentine” easily, but the choice of “funny” perfectly sums up the gist of the song: imperfections are beautiful.

Rustics and Fishermen Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)
 (from *Choral Dances from Gloriana*)

Although *Gloriana* was Britten’s least successful opera, these “choral dances” have become a beloved part of the choral canon. Commissioned in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the opera is set in the time of Queen Elizabeth I, the “Gloriana” referenced in the title of the opera. In “Rustics and Fishermen,” the tenors and basses present a contrast with their portrayal of the gifts they will bring from their simple country lives.

Fugue for Tinhorns (from *Guys and Dolls*) Frank Loesser (1910–1969)

Frank Loesser was one of our most successful musical theater and Tin Pan Alley composers, with shows such as *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* and *The Most Happy Fella*, and songs like “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” and “What Are You Doing New Year’s Eve?” part of his large compositional library. His most popular musical, *Guys and Dolls* opens (after a pantomimed street scene played out during the overture) with three “wise guys” singing about the perils of placing a bet on the next horse race. Like a traditional fugue, Loesser’s tune has a main melody (the subject) followed by a secondary melody (the countersubject) that gets thrown from voice to voice.

MADISON BOYCHOIR



Chichester Psalms Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990)

II. Adonai ro-i
 (sung in Hebrew)

Bruce Bengtson, organ; Johanna Wienholts, harp; Michael Koszewski, percussion
 Simon Johnson, Logan Mosling, trebles

<i>PSALM 23 (solo treble)</i>	
<i>Adonai ro-i, lo echsar.</i>	<i>The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.</i>
<i>Bin’ot deshe yarbitseini,</i>	<i>He makes me lie down in green pastures,</i>
<i>Al mei m’nuchot y’nahaleini,</i>	<i>He leads me beside the still waters,</i>
<i>Naf’shi y’shovev,</i>	<i>He restores my soul,</i>
<i>Yan ‘cheini b’ma’aglei tsedek,</i>	<i>He leads me in the paths of righteousness,</i>
<i>L’ma’an sh’mo.</i>	<i>For His name’s sake.</i>

<i>(Trebles)</i>	
<i>Gam ki eilech b’gei tsalmavet</i>	<i>Yea, though I walk through the valley</i>
	<i>of the shadow of death,</i>
<i>Lo ira ra, ki atah amadi.</i>	<i>I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me.</i>
<i>Shiv t’cha umishan’techa</i>	<i>Thy rod and Thy staff</i>
<i>Hemah y’nachamuni.</i>	<i>They comfort me.</i>

PSALM 2: 1-4 (Men)

Lamah rag'shu goyim
Ul'umim yeh'gu rik?
Yit'yats 'vu malchei erets,
V'roznim nos 'du yachad
Al Adonai v'al m'shicho.
N'natkah et mos'roteimo,
V'naslichah mimenu avoteimo.
Yoshev bashamayim yis'chak,
Adonai, yil'ag lamo!

Why do the nations rage
And the people imagine a vain thing?
The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the rulers take counsel together
Against the Lord and His anointed.
Saying, let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.
He that sits in the heavens shall laugh,
And the Lord shall have the in derision!

PSALM 23

(trebles, men continue Psalm 2 text)

Ta'aroch l'fanai shulchan
Neged tsor'rai
Dishanta vashemen roshi
Cosi r'vayach.

Thou preparest a table before me
In the presece of my enemeies,
Thou anointest my head with oil,
My cup runneth over.

PSALM 23 (solo treble)

Ach tov vachased
Yird'funi kol y'mei chayai
V'shav'ti b'veit Adonai
l'orech yamim.

Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all the days of my life,
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever.

The musical riches and influence of Leonard Bernstein are being celebrated around the world this year, the 100th anniversary of his birth. *Chichester Psalms* is being featured in many of these concerts, and in nearly all of them will be sung by a mixed choir of adult women and men, mostly owing to the difficulty of the work. Today's performance, however, features the voicing Bernstein intended (and always preferred): with boys singing the treble parts.

The piece was commissioned by Reverend Walter Hussey, the dean of the medieval cathedral in Chichester, on England's southern coast. The request came in 1963 with the gentle suggestion that a "hint of *West Side Story*" in the music would be welcome. Bernstein was a world-renowned conductor and composer, but was in something of a career crisis and he accepted the commission almost on a whim. What he created became not only his most frequently performed work for choir, but the most famous large choral work in Hebrew in the entire repertory.

Bernstein's choice of Hebrew for the text was significant on many levels. First was the novelty: the choir of men and boys at Chichester Cathedral only ever sang in English or Latin, in the Anglican tradition, and there were no significant choral works in Hebrew. Second, Bernstein was fluent in Hebrew from his Jewish upbringing, so the textual nuances and theology were significant to him. As we discussed in rehearsal, Bernstein's music was never a setting of vague, general emotions suggested by text, but an intentional statement of belief and meaning, built on an understanding of each word.

CANTILENA



A Girl's Garden (from *Frostiana*)

Randall Thompson (1899–1984)

As we pondered humor, we found that there is more than one kind of funny. While a good joke is one kind of funny, sometimes we don't have to look much further than our own selves to see humor. Particularly, some things seem funny—in a quaint, sweet, and endearing kind of way—when we look back on them. The girls looked back on their own lives and thought about some of the things that their younger selves did, said, or thought, and we smiled at the stories that they told. Sometimes, the girls admired their younger selves' lack of care, embarrassment, or concern, though it feels impossible to really turn back the clock and become that person again. This song is the telling of such a story, but interestingly, it is told in the third person—by a neighbor of the original teller. In our class, we also retold stories—the time Palma cut Clío's hair, Sophie's dramatic accidents, etc. Storytelling that has humor (even if it is subtle) really brings out our fully, engaged, present selves and that is what we are trying to show as well tell the story of a young, bold, somewhat naïve, but strong girl who didn't know enough to know what she wasn't supposed to be able to do.

Love Learns By Laughing

Thomas Morley (1557–1602)

This song's humor works a little like one of those jokes where you at first don't realize that it IS a joke and you are expecting a sincere answer, only to be fooled by an incongruent, sarcastic, or light-hearted reply. The "A" section is a nice sentiment: "Love learns by laughing first to speak, then slyly gains cares passing great." In other words, love first develops over shared laughter and joy and the more complicated love that endures hardships, issues and grief follows. Then there is the "B" section, which is the "punchline" here: "But I will laugh without that care and bid love touch me if he dare." We might have thought that this was going to be a tender love song about the virtues of enduring love, but the second line's playful challenge (You can't catch or trap me, Love!) goes in a different, light-hearted direction. The playful, polyphonic vocal lines fit the "I will choose my own path" perspective of the madrigal.

Turn, Turn, Then Thine Eyes (from *The Fairy Queen*)

Henry Purcell (1659–1695)

This soprano duet contains many moments of musical wit, but to really "get it," you have to understand layers of meaning in both the notes and rhythms, as well as the text. Many jokes that we analyzed were based on our ability to understand text in multiple ways. For instance, this joke: "What is so great about Switzerland? I don't know, but the flag is a big plus!" This is funny because it starts like an actual question and the answer is unexpected, but also because we have two ways of understanding the word "plus." If you don't know both of the definitions of "plus" or you don't have the background knowledge to know what Switzerland's flag looks like, then you don't get the joke.


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The second movement juxtaposes two ancient psalms which could not be more different in tone. The first, Psalm 23, is the tender psalm of confidence, “The Lord is my shepherd.” Its poet was David, the shepherd boy who later became King of Israel, and Bernstein signals this by a striking use of harp (David’s instrument) and the poignant sound of a boy soprano. Even the initial “cling” of the opening chord suggests the Middle East. Bernstein’s music is all quiet joy and innocent trust in a loving Shepherd. The entrance of the sopranos and altos created a shimmering, dream-like texture on the words “gam ki elech” (“walk through the valley of the shadow of death”). But there is more. The alto voice follows the soprano in close canon, a clever sonic metaphor for a shadow. But in this case the shadow which trails us is not our own, but the darker “shadow of death.”

This is music of exquisite beauty, but it is shockingly interrupted by a cry from the tenors and basses: “La-mah!” (“Why?”) We are suddenly cast into a world of violence, conflict, and the defiant muttering of God’s enemies. For this, Bernstein recycled some unused music from *West Side Story*, a snarling song of aggression sung by the rival gangs, Jets and Sharks, called “Mix! Make a Mess of ‘Em.” Percussion and random vocal accents underscore the discord and chaos of a world shaking its fist at God.

There is nothing funny about this music. It is thoughtful and serious—even heavy—in tackling some of the oldest, deepest human concerns. There is, however, a feature of this piece that is shared with all good jokes. Margaret Jenks taught the boys to identify the “pivot” or “double” in a joke, that word or phrase that carries two meanings at once. The way our mind pings back and forth between the two meanings, at the moment both are revealed, is the delight of puns and wordplay jokes.

Bernstein plays on a similar kind of pivot, in this case the idea of “enemy.” Amidst the raging of God’s enemies, the composer brings back the tranquil mood and melody of Psalm 23, just at the words “you prepare a table in the presence of my enemies.” It is not only ironic, but strangely comforting, as God’s “higher view” on human conflict is brought into focus.

The movement eventually is calm again, with the boy soprano restoring the tranquility of the opening. But even in this peaceful ending, the uncertainty remains. Bernstein himself described this ending as “in unresolved fashion, with both elements, faith and fear, interlocked.”

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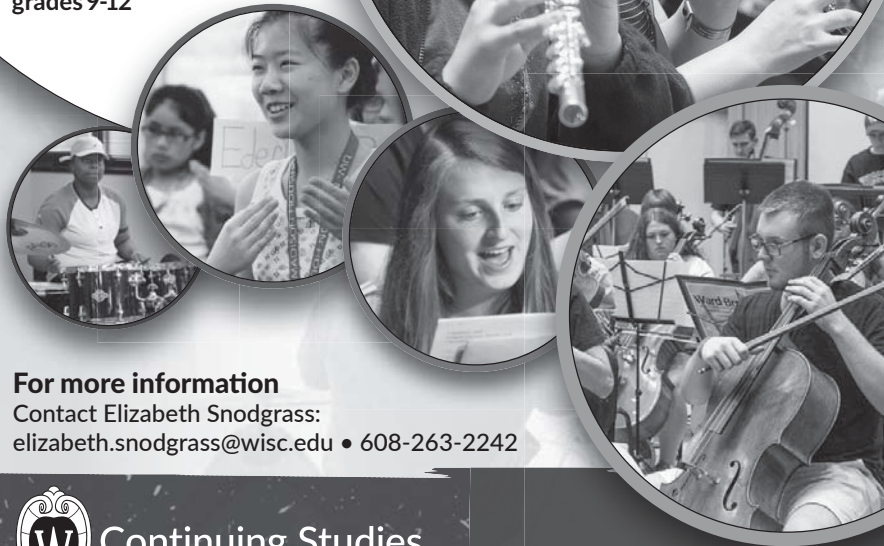
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