

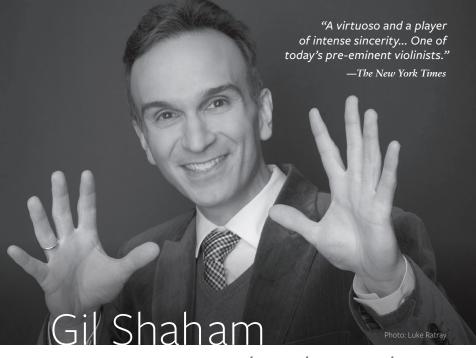


# SISTER CITIES

**December 10, 2017** 

# MADISON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

John DeMain I Music Director



plays Tchaikovsky

january 19, 20, 21

#### major funding provided by:

Irving and Dorothy Levy Family Foundation, Inc.
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# A WORD ABOUT TODAY'S CONCERTS



Ainaro, East Timor Arcatao, El Salvador Camaguey, Cuba Freiburg, Germany Kanifing, The Gambia Mantova, Italy Obihiro, Japan Tepatitlán, Mexico Vilnius, Lithuania

One of the most important things we model for our singers is making connections. We value becoming "expert noticers"—people that observe their world and ask questions. In designing a semester centered around Madison's sister cities, our primary focus was not on performing music from those cities (although you will hear music with different connections to many of the cities in today's concerts), but instead our focus was on larger questions. Why do cities extend official friendships to one another? What is gained by forging these civic connections? And how does the music we are studying hint at these larger themes of interconnectedness and our need for understanding each other across cultural divides?

Today you'll hear music that connects us to places far away, helping us to recognize the familiar and more importantly, to understand the unfamiliar. From the music of the court of Mantua during the late Renaissance to Cuban folk songs to the *gamelan* music from Indonesia to the unique Japanese national anthem, today's music will hopefully prompt you to consider the same questions we have been wrestling with this semester. We hope today's concerts will bring you exceptional joy in seeing all that our singers have accomplished and all they continue to achieve.

—From all of us at MYC.

# **Special Thanks**

Our winter concert series, now named the *Diane Ballweg Winter Concerts*, has been permanently endowed by Diane Ballweg. Her incredible gift supports the production costs of presenting a winter concert series each year in perpetuity. We are grateful to Diane for her long-time support of MYC. If you are interested in learning more about creating a concert endowment, please contact us. We'd love to talk to you more about how an endowment gift can make a significant impact on the wonderful young musicians you will hear today.



# 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.

Madison Youth Choirs • P.O. Box 5233 Madison, WI 53705 • 608-238-SING (7464) madisonyouthchoirs.org



# Thank You to Our Sponsors!

This concert is generously endowed by the **Diane Ballweg Performance Fund**. Additional support for our 2017-2018 season comes from:







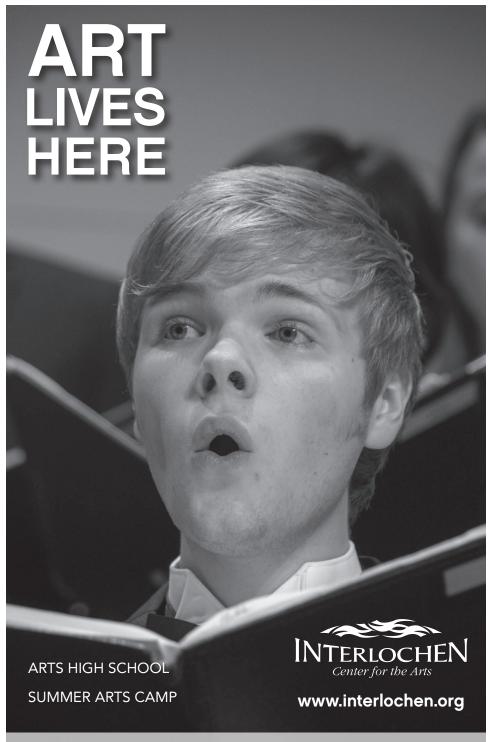






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# **Staff and Board of Directors**



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# SISTER CITIES

1:30p.m. Sunday, December 10 First Congregational Church



# **CHORALIERS**

Lisa Kjentvet, conductor Scott Gendel, piano

# **CON GIOIA**

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

# **CAPRICCIO**

Lisa Kjentvet, conductor Scott Gendel, piano Eliav Goldman, choir intern

Ian Disjardin, percussion Amber Dolphin, violin Heidi Kenney, violin

# **CHORALIERS**



#### Now We Are Met

Samuel Webbe (1740–1816)

*Now We Are Met* is one of the best-known 'welcome' catches. Webbe is considered an outstanding composer of glees and catches, as evident in his nine published collections of these smaller choral works and his twenty-six prize medals from the Catch Club, of which he was a member. Just as sister cities create bonds between people from different cities around the world by promoting peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation, we celebrate building new friendships within our ensemble.

#### Sakura

Traditional Japanese folk song

(sung in Japanese)

Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms, Across the spring sky, As far as the eye can see. Is it mist, or clouds? Fragrant in the air. Come now, come now, Let's go see them!

*Sakura* is a well-known traditional Japanese folk song and popular children's song. "*Sakura*" translates to "cherry blossom" and refers to the Japanese cherry tree. The blooming of the cherry tree signifies the arrival of spring and therefore is associated with renewal and rebirth. The song is traditionally performed on the *koto*, the national instrument of Japan where our sister city Obihiro is located. In 1912, the Japanese gave the United States 3,000 cherry blossom trees, located in Washington D.C., in hope of a growing, new friendship between our two countries.

**Tecolote** (sung in Spanish)

Spanish lullaby Arranged by Victoria Ebel-Sabo (b. 1957)

Owl of Guadana, bird of the dawn, If I only had your wings to go and see my love. Poor little owl, you are tired from flying.

Victoria Ebel-Sabo has ties to our city, having received her Master of Music degree from UW-Madison. Her work is inspired by a desire to share the emotional qualities of the music. Spanish was her father's first language and she happily recalls hearing this lullaby sung to her siblings. The "ticuri-cui-cui-cu" of the little owl, the delightful lilting melody and the image of the tired Tecolote have held a special place in her heart since childhood and inspired her to share this lovely Spanish lullaby with other children who enjoy singing. We sing this piece in honor of our three sister cities whose official language is Spanish: Tepatitlán, Mexico; Aractao, El Salvador; and Camaguey, Cuba.

Traditional Jewish folk song Arranged by Valerie Shields

Spinning top, spin, spin, spin, Chanukah is a good holiday! It is a holiday of joy for the people. A great miracle happened there!

*S'vivon* is a traditional folk song celebrating the holiday of Chanukah. The word "chanukah" means "to dedicate" and refers to the joyous eight-day celebration through which the Jews commemorate the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Syria in 165 B.C.E. and the subsequent liberation and "rededication" of the Temple in Jerusalem. "S'vivon" is Hebrew for the traditional spinning top used in Chanukah games, also called dreidel in Yiddish. The Choraliers learned to play the dreidel game in the spirit of celebrating cultural exchange and discussed the importance of being open minded to different traditions. Prior to World War II, Madison's sister city Vilnius was one of the largest Jewish centers in Europe. Its Jewish influence led to it being described as the "Jerusalem of Lithuania" and the "Jerusalem of the North."



## Peace Round

Traditional round Text by Jean Ritchie

The music for this traditional song originally had the words "Hey, Ho, Nobody Home;" these lyrics were added by Appalachian folk singer Jean Ritchie. As we explored the idea of sister cities and thought about why we would want to have them, students often expressed that when we know more about someone, we are more likely to have a peaceful relationship with them. We no longer think of people in another country as "they"—focusing on our differences—but as "we"—focusing on what we share in common.

# **Shepherd's Pipe Carol**

John Rutter (b.1945)

Rutter composed this piece when he was only 18 and it has become a staple in Christmas programming. We enjoyed performing it with the Madison Symphony for "A Madison Symphony Christmas" in early December.

Murasame

(sung in Japanese)

Victor C. Johnson Text: 11<sup>th</sup> century Japanese poem

The rain, which fell from passing showers, like drops of dew still lies.

As we learned about our sister city in Obihiro, Japan, we discovered that the Japanese have a harmonious relationship with nature. There are important seasonal festivals celebrating cherry blossom-viewing, moon-viewing, and snow-viewing. It is also apparent in their architecture, clothing, foods, art and literature. Con Gioia singers shared ways that they spend time in nature and what it means to them, and many of the students expressed feeling a connection with the Japanese way of looking at nature.

### Guantanamera

Cuban folk song Text by José Martí (1853–1895)

Cuban radio personality Joseito Fernandez first used the tune and words "Guantanamera, guajira Guantanamera" to introduce the topics of the day on his program through lyrics he made up to the verses. Later, lyrics were created from the poetry of Cuban poet and independence hero, José Martí. His *Versos Sencillos* (simple verses) was a collection of poems from which this song took four verses. It was later adopted by popular Cuban and American singers, including Pete Seeger, who used it as part of the peace movement at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. He urged that the people sing the song as a symbol of unity between the American and Cuban peoples.



A Circle is Cast Anna Dembska

A circle is a symbol of unity and wholeness. Within the context of group gatherings, using the form of a circle enables everyone to feel included as an equal participant. This round, sung over a drone line, can be sung as the ritualized process of casting a circle occurs, consciously defining a space in which energy can be raised, contained, and focused on individual empowerment and the building of a greater sense of community. *A Circle is Cast* has been recorded by Libana, a women's world music chorus that believes in the power of song to connect people across vast cultural difference. Creating a bridge of the heart, their commitment to the artistic expression of the global community has inspired dynamic cross-cultural understanding, profound healing, and widespread peacebuilding, which aligns closely with the mission of Sister Cities International.

# Ich will den Herrn loben alle Zeit (sung in German)

Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1776) Arranged by Wallace Depue

I will praise the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

The canon was an extremely versatile genre in the 17th and 18th centuries and could be used to satisfy a wide variety of musical demands. Many formal portraits of composers included a canon, both as an insignia of the composer's craft, and as a demonstration of his learning. Canons could serve the social function of house gifts, and were scribbled into family albums, often quite quickly, as a souvenir of a musician's visit. They served an educational function as well. Young students could be taught to sing in parts quite easily by the use of canons, a practice that continues to this day (program note by Vincent Corrigan). Telemann studied or worked in at least seven different cities in Germany, likely passing through Madison's sister sity of Freiburg.

# Ma come bali bene bela bimba

(sung in Italian)

Traditional Italian Arranged by Mark Sirett (b. 1952)

You dance so well pretty lady, pretty lady,
You dance so well, pretty lady, you dance so well!
Look, she is walking by,
The villanella
She is so beautiful
She makes everybody fall in love with her!
Look at the old man
Under the ladder,
Oh, goodness! He wants to catch her!
Look at that blackbird
Inside the cage.
Oh, goodness! Look how angry he is!

This spirited song comes from the Veneto, the area surrounding the city of canals, Venice, located just east of our sister city, Mantua. The arrangement was written for the Cantabile Children's Choir of Kingston, Ontario in honor of Laura Biagi, a specialist in Italian folk song and folklore.

**Soran Bushi** (sung in Japanese)

Japanese folk song Arranged by Wendy B. Stuart

One of the best-known Japanese folk songs, *Soran Bushi* is a fisherman's work song from Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands, where our sister city Obihiro is located. It includes kakegoe (shouts and calls used in traditional Japanese music, Kabuki theater and in martial arts), sounds used to encourage the fishermen to carry on with their work hauling in the fishnets. The sounds have no specific meaning, similar in English to the expression "heave ho!" In the song title, "soran" is this type of word but "bushi" means song. The syllabic singing on TON and TO is meant to imitate the sound of the koto. The words chosen for this setting, one verse of many, translates "I ask the seagull (kanome) if the herring have come. I ask the waves (nami) about the migrating birds (tori)."

## Yo Le Canto Todo El Dia

David L. Brunner (b. 1953)

(sung in Spanish)

So I am moving with my heart, So I am leaving with a drum, I sing to you all day long with affection and joy, So I am leaving with a drum with affection and emotion.

*Yo Le Canto Todo El Dia* is characterized by infectious rhythms and playful melodies. While not distinctly Venezuelan, it captures the vitality and charm of the region and speaks of our oneness with music and the power of music to express our emotions - no matter where we live.





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# SISTER CITIES

4:00p.m. Sunday, December 10 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

Members of Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestras:
Steven Wilke, Anand Shatdal, Rachael Lee,
Nathaniel Johnson, Meghna Datta, Mary Hsu, violin
Brett Pretrykowski, Meera Bradley, viola
Morty Lee, Sam Miller, cello
Soren Davick, bass
Maggie Setterstrom, Brian Liebau, flute
Ryan Treves, Carter Van Fossen, trumpet

# MADISON BOYCHOIR



**Dance for the Nations** 

John Krumm Arranged by Randal Swiggum

# PURCELL



A La Nanita Nana (sung in Spanish)

José Ramón Gomis (1856–1939) Arranged by David Eddlemann

Come, let's sing a little lullaby, come, let's sing a little. My baby is sleepy, blessed be, blessed be.
Little spring running clear and loud.
Nightingale that in the forest.
Sings and weeps.
Hush, while the cradle rocks.
Come, let's sing a little lullaby.

This traditional Christmas carol was composed in Spain in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but has since become a very popular lullaby in many Spanish speaking countries, including Mexico. While there are many musical gestures that reminded the boys of other Mexican repertoire they had heard, the beautiful melody and gentle shape of the song really resonated with them. Though we looked at what was unique and different about Tepatitlán, the boys agreed that one thing we share with its people (as well as people all over the world) is the bond between parent and child. Singing before bed—a soothing, repetitious melody—is not something that only happens right here, but is a ritual that we share with families all over the globe.

# Es is Ein Ros entsprungen

Melchior Vulpius (1570–1615)

(sung in German)

A rose has sprung up, from a tender root. As the ancients sang to us, Its lineage was from Jesse.

This text was first printed in a collection of songs in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, though there is some speculation that it could date back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The first printed edition in 1582 contained 19 verses and another printed shortly afterwards had 23. Both elaborate on the analogy between the Virgin Mary and a perfect, spotless rose. The text was set, following the basic melody that is used in these early collections by several composers—most famously Michael Praetorius. The Vulpius version is a simple unison vocal line designed to be sung in canon. The irregular shape of some of

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the vocal lines and phrase lengths make the piece sound like it comes from a different time and place. What the boys loved most about singing this piece were its melodic "quirks," wide vocal range, and the sophisticated sound of singing German in two or three parts.

#### Sakura

Traditional Japanese folksong Arranged by Purcell Choir Members

The song "Sakura" was probably written in the early 19th century and has been popular since about 1868, when it was included in a book for beginning *koto* players. Since the Meiji period in Japan (1868-1912), it has only increased in prevalence and popularity. It is included in multiple collections of most beloved Japanese folk songs, sung at many international gatherings as a song to represent Japan, and is even used as "guiding music" at many electronic traffic crossing lights! Though the music is relatively modern (by Japanese standards), the reverence for the cherry blossom flower dates to at least the 8th century.

It is impossible to overstate the importance and prevalence of this flower in Japanese culture. The tree intentionally decorates schools and public buildings, dictates the beginning of the new school and fiscal years, commands its own Cherry Blossom Association that lists top blossom areas in every prefecture in the country, and is rich with over a millennium of symbolism. The flower's presence in art, song, poetry, meditations, fashion, architecture and nationalism is a central defining symbol of Japanese aesthetic and culture.

Just as *Es ist ein Ros* is about more than a blooming flower, Sakura is more than just a lovely tree. To the people of Obihiro, it represents nationality, fragility of life, the ephemeral nature of beauty, and something deeply precious. I challenged the boys to think: "For you, when is a flower not just a flower?" In other words, what meaning do you bestow on regular, every day things? As they discovered, it is in our nature to be "meaning-makers." Whether it is a a flower, a special rock, or certain food, people tend to associate feelings with objects that can run far deeper than their practical function.



Two Elegies by Britten

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

I. Old Abram Brown

II. Tom Bowling

Though both pieces are by Britten and both ostensibly are reflections on the deceased, the Britten boys discovered the songs could not be more different in tone. "Tom Bowling" is Britten's take on a 1789 song by Charles Dibdin (1740–1814). Dibdin wrote many sailor songs like this—many at the request of the British government to "keep alive the national feelings against the French" during the American Revolution

and the War of 1812. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was said that Dibdin's songs were "worth ten thousand sailors to the cause of England"—so powerful were they in painting a picture of a life at sea as noble, heroic, and emblematic of the strong bonds of male friendship. Britten boys often commented on how "cheerful" the song was, even though it was lamenting Tom Bowling's passing. They also were endlessly fascinated not only by the arcane, poetic 18<sup>th</sup> century text, but the carefully chosen sailing terms put to use as metaphors for Tom's passing "aloft."

While we were rehearsing "Old Abram Brown" in November, one boy blurted out "this guy died alone and friendless—the opposite of Tom Bowling." We looked for clues in the text and found none: *Old Abram Brown is dead and gone. You'll never see him more. He used to wear a long, brown coat that buttoned down before.* Yet we all agreed that "old, alone, and friendless" was certainly true. How did we know? The music carried the message, apart from the text—a significant insight. The piece is deceptively difficult to sing, from a vocal standpoint, and Britten's compositional craft gave us plenty to consider, including the ideas of pedal point (the note that stays the same while the others around it change, e.g. the piano chiming on "E") and augmentation, where the melody is sung in note values twice as long (slow), creating a powerful effect.

# No che non morira (from *Tito Manlio*)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741)

(sung in Italian)

No, he shall not die, for the good of all. It is wrong that a conqueror should sit, unhappy, in so many torments. Yes, Manlio shall live.

There could hardly be a better sister city for a choir than the ancient city of Mantua (Mantova), Italy. Its power and influence under the famous Gonzaga family made it for centuries one of the most important artistic and cultural hubs in Northern Italy, rivalling nearby Venice in musical influence. It is still a city of architectural significance, with its magnificent palaces and Renaissance old city. This is where Romeo was banished in Shakespeare's play, and where Roman poet Virgil was born.

Mantua is also significant in the history of opera and choral music, as home to not one but many Italian composers, including Monteverdi, di Lasso, and Salamone Rossi—all represented on MYC programs today.

Antonio Vivaldi wrote most of his 49 operas in Venice, but one of his finest, Tito Manlio, was written when he lived in Mantua between 1718–1720. The occasion was the 1719 marriage celebration of his employer, Prince Philip of Hesse-Darmstadt. Philip was a great lover of music and had brought Vivaldi to his palace to add luster to his court. In the end, the wedding was called off when the bride, Princess Eleonora di Guastalla, refused to enter the city gates. Vivaldi must have certainly been disappointed to see his opera cancelled—he had written the three-hour opera in a mere five days—but he had a Plan B. The opera was premiered a few months later at Carnival, to great acclaim and in a spectacular production with lavish costumes, sets, and special effects.

The opera's plot is a complicated tale of ancient Rome, with the warfare, politics, love, and cruelty characteristic of many Baroque operas on classical stories. Manlio has been imprisoned (wrongly) by his father for treason and is sentenced to death. In this scene, his friend and captain of the guard, Decio, pleads strongly with Manlio's father to set him free, for the good of Rome and for his own conscience. Today's performance is certainly the first by any boychoir—this edition was created specifically for Britten.

# HOLST

# O Rosetta

Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

(sung in Italian)

- 1. O rose, rose that through the fair green of your leaves in modesty lies hidden like a pure maiden that is still unwed.
  2. If born of a fair cluster, it did not worry or concern you.
- 2. If born of a fair cluster, it did not worry or concern you, but I so esteem you that, in your praise, my thoughts have their reward. (Gabrielo Chiabrera)

Claudio Monteverdi, one of the most prolific and truly innovative composers in history, moved to Mantua at age 23 to enter the service of Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga. The next 22 years were spent writing opera, madrigals, and an outpouring of sacred and secular music, including pieces like this one, intended for the pleasure of the court.

The rhythmic vitality of this lively song comes from its persistent alternating of triple and duple meters (like Bernstein's "America" from *West Side Story*). Published in 1607 as part of a collection of songs for amateur music-making, it features a recurring instrumental ritornello. Its elegant Italian text compares a lovely rose, hidden among the foliage, to a shy girl.

# O là, o che bon eccho

Orlando di Lasso (1532–1594)

(sung in Italian)

Hello! What a lovely echo! Let's try it out. Pleased to meet you! Ha ha ha ha, let's all laugh!

Oh my fine companion? What do you want? I'd like you to sing a song.

Why? Why should I? Why not? Because I don't want to.

Why don't you want to? Because I don't feel like it!

Shut up I say!

You shut up, you big fool!

Yes Sir! Come now, no more!

Let's go! Goodbye good echo!

Peace be with you. That's enough, enough, enough...

Tradition says that Orlando di Lasso was kidnapped several times as a boy because of his beautiful singing voice (a legend we love to perpetuate in the boychoir).

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Diane Ballweg Winterfest Concerts

# Saturday, March 10, 2018

11:30 am – Opus One & Sinfonietta 1:30 pm - Harp Ensemble & Concert Orchestra 4:00 pm – Philharmonia Orchestra 7:00 pm – Youth Orchestra Mills Concert Hall, UW Humanities Building



mphony

1:30 pm

Mills Concert Hall, UW Humanities Building



Although he was born in the Low Countries (Mons, in modern Belgium), we know for sure that when he was just twelve years old, Orlando di Lasso moved to Mantua, where the musical scene—thanks to the Gonzaga family—was lively and rich. It was here that he began his career as a composer, learning all the latest styles in this music-crazy city. It was a career that would carry him throughout Europe as one of the most celebrated international composers of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, with none other than Shakespeare including one of di Lasso's songs in his *Henry IV*.

Di Lasso's famous "Echo Song" has been a favorite of singers since it was published in 1581. The novelty of the echo chorus is entertaining, but overshadows an equally delightful novelty: di Lasso's playing with shifting tonalities. In the space between echoing phrases, the music keeps "trying out" new keys, in much the same way that we "try out" our voices when we discover a tunnel or room with an echo.

#### We Are...

Ysaye M. Barnwell (b. 1946)

The women's singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock recorded this piece in 1993 and it has become a beloved part of the choral canon, poetically capturing a sense of humanity's oneness, throughout time and space and divisions that threaten to separate. There is a forward-moving energy in its "roll-call" structure, but the summary of "we are one" doesn't appear until the very last moments of the song.

# **MADISON BOYCHOIR**



# Chorus of Street Boys from *Carmen* (sung in French)

Georges Bizet (1838–1875)

With the mounted guard we arrive! Here we are! Sound forth, dazzling trumpet! Ta ra ta ta! We march, heads high, like little soldiers, Marking without a mistake—one, two, marking the step! Shoulders back, chest out, arms like this—falling right alongside the body. Ta-ta-ta-ta! Here we are!

Madison Opera mounted a spectacular production of Bizet's *Carmen* back in November and it gave us our opportunity to again learn one of the most famous pieces ever written for boys on stage. Appearing nearly at the top of the show, this catchy number doesn't advance the plot as much as provide a sprightly contrast to the adult themes that emerge in Act 1: romance, jealousy, and fighting. The boys are doing an imitation of the soldiers they see daily performing their military routines—marching with shoulders back, arms stiff, chest out. Bizet's use of the bugle and fife (piccolo and trumpet) is captivating.

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Artistic Director Albert Pinsonneault Composer-in-Residence Eric William Barnum

# Friday, December 15th 7:30pm Sunday, December 17th 3:00pm

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# Kimigayao (The National Anthem of Japan)

(sung in Japanese)

Melody by Hiromori Hayashi (1831–1896)

May thy peaceful reign last long!
May it last thousands of years,
Until this tiny stone will grow into a massive rock,
And the moss will cover it all deep and thick.

Our sister cities project gave us a chance to look at nine very different cultures. One of our discoveries was how much the national anthems of most countries all sound very similar (and similar to ours): brash, loud, with martial dotted rhythms and swagger. The boys realized that this was one of the effects of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century colonialism: most anthems sounded European and not at all like the music of a country's indigenous peoples.

One exception was this anthem. Short, simple, plain yet elegant, it is a musical representation of much of Japanese art and architecture. Its lyrics are the oldest among the world's national anthems, dating from the Heian period (794–1185). It is also one of the world's shortest anthems, at just eleven measures of music (and 32 characters of Japanese). Its text is enigmatic, like a Zen saying or riddle. The boys puzzled over its metaphor. A rock is a symbol of strength and durability, but here the metaphor is backwards: small rocks do not become large boulders.

**Dance for the Nations** 

John Krumm Arranged by Randal Swiggum



# SISTER CITIES

7:00p.m. Sunday, December 10 First Congregational Church



# **CANTILENA**

Mary Schmidt, conductor Steve Radtke, piano

# **RAGAZZI**

Michael Ross, conductor Jess Salek, piano

# **CANTABILE**

Margaret Jenks and Michael Ross, conductors Jess Salek, piano

# **CANTILENA**



# **How Can I Keep From Singing?**

Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

My life flows on in endless song above earth's lamentation. I hear the real though distant song that hails a new creation. Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing. It sounds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?

What though the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth, it's living! What though the darkness round me close, songs in the night it's giving! No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I'm clinging. Since I believe that love abides, how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble when they hear the bells of freedom ringing. When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing? In prison cell, in dungeon dark, our thoughts to them are winging. When friends hold courage in their heart, how can I keep from singing?

Based on a Quaker hymn that dates from the 1800s, the text of *How Can I Keep From Singing* speaks of persecution and life's trials, yet faith, courage and love prevail. The message encourages us to persevere no matter what obstacles we face. Ms. Walker incorporates plenty of dynamic contrast and this arrangement never fails to lift us up, both musically and emotionally.

# **Liebeslieder Walzer** (sung in German)

Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) Text by Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800–1875)

# 4. Wie des Abends (from Opus 52)

Like the evening's lovely red, would I, a poor maiden, like to glow, to please one—and then radiate bliss forever.

# 13. Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft (from Opus 52)

The little bird rushes through the air, searching for a branch; and my heart desires a heart, a heart on which it can blessedly rest.

# 13. **Nein, geliebter, setze dich** (from Opus 65)

Sweetheart, don't sit so close to me. Don't gaze at me so wistfully. Even though you are on fire, stay cool and keep your distance So that the world will not see how much we love each other.

These beautiful waltzes have given us the opportunity to be immersed in a lot of German. The texts all deal with love—someone who wants to glow happily and beautifully like the sunset, a little bird (or person!) searching for a secure place to "land" and lastly, a very forbidden relationship. The singers like to imagine that the third song may possibly be representative of Brahms and his relationship with Clara Schumann, the wife of his dear friend, Robert Schumann.

Witches' Chorus (from Macbeth) (sung in Italian)

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

They are leaving us now. We'll meet again when we hear the dreadful roar of the thunder.

We must fly! Their fate will be known at the next sabbath.

Now we await the return of Macbeth. He'll learn the secrets of life and death.

This dramatic chorus is sung early in the opera by the Witches after Macbeth and Banquo leave the woods. The "weird beings" have just delivered three prophecies that will all ultimately come to fruition and they plot their next moves.

Giuseppe Verdi loved Shakespeare—*Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Falstaff* are all operatic masterpieces inspired by the texts of the great bard.

Mantua has enjoyed singing and learning Italian, the language of singers and of Mantova. We have been experimenting with our inner divas and have tried to make our voices sound more operatic and dramatic.

# RAGAZZI

Bar'chu

Salamon Rossi (c. 1570–1630)

(sung in Hebrew)

Bless the Lord who is to be praised.
Bless the Lord who is to be praised, now and forever.

Rossi, an Italian-Jewish violinist and composer, served at the Court of Mantua, Italy, one of Madison's sister cities. A contemporary of Monteverdi, and a bridge between the late Renaissance and early Baroque, Rossi wrote and published settings of Christian religious texts but also a unique collection of Jewish liturgical music, of which this setting is a part. Unlike traditional synagogue music of the time, his works did not include any traditional chants. The Bar'chu prayer is the traditional Jewish call to worship.

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# **The Pasture** (from *Frostiana*)

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring: I'll only stop to rake the leaves away (And wait to watch the water clean, I may): I sha'n't be gone long. —You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf That's standing by the mother. It's so young, It totters when she licks it with her tongue. I sha'n't be gone long. —You come too. Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Frost's simple yet profound recounting of a snapshot in time paints a detailed picture in two short stanzas. Thompson's setting of the text comes from a longer work based on Frost poetry. This musical setting sets a pastoral-style instrumental interlude against a simple, mostly homophonic (all voices moving together) setting of the text. The final "you come too" measures in each section are set apart by increasingly longer bits of silence which create a sense of wistfulness and longing.

# Mogami Gawa Funa Uta

(sung in Japanese)

Watanabe/Goto, based on folk materials Arranged by Osamu Shimizu

(various cheers!)
I'm going to Sakata; take care of yourself.
Be sure not to catch a cold.
(various cheers!)
It is hard to say goodbye;
The tail wind is pushing the boat from ashore
Don't resent me, resent the wind
It's for her; no matter how much I earn, it's not enough.

The Mogami River is one of the three major rivers in Japan and is considered the "mother" of the Yamagata Prefecture in which it runs. In 1936, the local NHK radio station asked two men, Watanabe and Goto, to provide a song for their upcoming program about riding down the Mogami River. Not being able to think of a song that was specifically about going down the river on a boat, they created a new composite folk song, borrowing elements of different folk and work-songs from the region, and wrote it from the perspective of a boatman/skipper.

Reflecting the early days when being a boatman was a dangerous profession due to the many treacherous currents in the river, this song has elements of farewell, hardship, melancholy, tenderness, and bitterness. The cheers underline the rhythmic pull of the oarsmen, paddling against the current.

 $Adapted\ program\ notes\ by\ Akiko\ Fujimoto\ and\ Jameson\ Marvin.$ 





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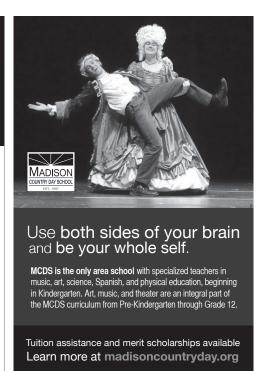


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# **CANTABILE**



**Angelus ad pastores ait** (from *Sacrae Cantiunculae*, 1582) (sung in Latin) Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1643)

The angels said to the shepherds: I bring you tidings of great joy, For the Saviour of the world has been born to you today, Alleluia!

Claudio Monteverdi, one of the most prolific and truly innovative composers in history, moved to Mantua at age 23 to enter the service of Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga. *Angelus ad Pastores Ait* gives us a peek into who this famous citizen of our sister city was before he began his professional life, as it was composed by a fifteen-year-old Monteverdi. Though Cantabile practiced this particular piece for performance, we listened to and noted differences between Monteverdi's work in different genres and in different times in his life. His later operas, earlier madrigals and later concerted madrigals show, through their great variety of writing styles, that Monteverdi was a composer that was always thinking, changing and challenging himself. We marveled at the details in the polyphonic imitation, text setting, symmetrical phrase shaping and interesting rhythmic choices beneath the surface of this short, somewhat simple piece, penned by a young man about the age of the members of our ensemble.

#### Gamelan

R. Murray Schafer (b. 1933)

East Timor, home to Ainaro, Madison's sister city, lived as an occupied nation for hundreds of years. In 1975, after 9 days of independence from Portugal, it was invaded and occupied by Indonesia, which ruled until 2002. East Timor's music has been influenced by nearby Indonesia for many years, whether occupied or an independent nation.

*Gamelan* refers to the Indonesian gamelan orchestra, an instrumental tradition strong throughout Indonesia. The ensembles consist of mostly percussive instruments including metallophones and gongs. Schafer's work strives to capture the sound of the ensemble, its signature five note scale (there are many in the Gamelan world; this one is called *slendro*). To learn this complicated work, Cantabile singers strove to learn the syllables assigned to the five notes of the slendro scale until they became as second-nature as our own scale syllables (do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do). The percussive sounds of the syllables conjure the sounds of the Gamelan orchestra itself.

# Mata del Anima Sola (sung in Spanish)

Antonio Estévez (1916–1988) Arranged by Alberto Grau

Tree of the lonely soul, wide opening of the riverside—
Now you will be able to say: Here slept Cantaclaro
With the whistle and the sting of the twisting wind,
The dappled and violet dusk quietly entered the corral.
The night, tired mare, shakes her main and black tail above the riverside;
And, in its silence, your ghostly heart is filled with awe.
(With the whistle and the sting of the twisting wind...)

This work, based on a poem by Alberto Arvelo Torrealba, has two distinct sections: one slow and meditative, and the other very quick and rhythmic based on a combined ¾ and % meter which is characteristic of a dance called *joropo*. The music depicts the solitude and mystery of the llanos, the high plains of Venezuela, while the soloist represents the llanero or "person of the plains" whose songs are improvised.

Program notes by María Guinand.

# **CANTABILE AND RAGAZZI**



# The Virgin Mary Had a Baby Boy

Traditional carol from Trinidad Arranged by Stephen Hatfield

Every first weekend in December many of our MYC singers get to sing in an incredible concert hall with an amazing professional orchestra and a world-famous conductor. Our collaboration with the Madison Symphony Orchestra Christmas concerts dates back more than 20 years. Our singers treasure this meaningful experience and tonight we share one selection from those concerts with you.

This traditional Caribbean song probably originated in Trinidad. It was first popularized in this country in the holiday season of 1958, when Harry Belafonte had a hit with this song during a Calypso craze in United States. Stephen Hatfield's *a cappella* setting makes the most of the song's light Calypso rhythm, spicing it up with clapped accents and blue notes.

Program note by Michael Allsen.

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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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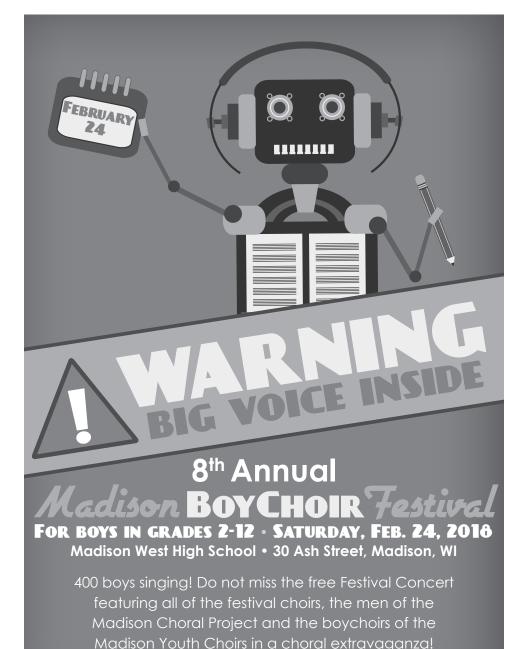
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