

V I S

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Saturday, December 7 | Sunday, December 8

Middleton Performing Arts Center

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“What a heartwarming experience! The musicians continue to be incredible, the soloists were entertaining and talented, the choirs sang beautifully and the conductor’s skill, humility and sense of humor is, as usual, amazing.”
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JOHN DEMAIN | MUSIC DIRECTOR

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Michelle Johnson
Soprano



Mackenzie Whitney
Tenor

DEC

Fri. 12/13, 7:30 p.m.
Sat. 12/14, 8:00 p.m.
Sun. 12/15, 2:30 p.m.



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Dates, artists, and program subject to change.

VISION



Titling this semester's theme with a word like *vision*--and then adding the 2020 quip--provided almost too many avenues of thoughtful exploration for our ensembles. Are we looking ahead? Behind? Where do we *focus*? What are we actually *looking at*?

Ironically, *Vision 2020* became an exercise in paying attention to the blurry--to the questions that make us wonder--and set in motion a study in how to *see*.

We practiced being *expert noticers*, (our trademark strategy coined by Margaret Jenks) to piece together details to find larger meaning. What clues are hidden in a 12th century Latin text that provide context and meaning for the music? How does the shape of the music suggest its purpose?

We did a lot of *speculating*. Literally. As in, we "viewed mentally" (from the Latin *specere*). We asked a lot of questions and sought interpretation from evidence we could find in the music or in the text. Why did the composer make this choice? What's the effect?

We *envisioned* and found common ground with artists who are able to imagine something that's never been seen before, and with composers crafting music ahead of their time--that still inspires hundreds of years later. Celebrating artistic vision teaches us there are multiple ways of seeing and interpreting the world.

Whether you hear just one or all three of our concerts this weekend, we hope you enjoy experiencing the music that taught us there are myriad ways of *seeing*.

Thank you for attending!



ABOUT THESE CONCERTS

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 about how an endowment gift can make a significant impact on the wonderful young musicians you will hear today.

SPECIAL THANKS

It's a time of transition for Madison Youth Choirs as we eagerly await the completion of our new home in spring 2021. Until then, we are thankful to our wonderful general contractor CG Schmidt and our generous partners at Christ Presbyterian Church for our temporary office and rehearsal spaces. (Please visit madisonyoutharts.org for more information about our future home!)



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.



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

These concerts are generously endowed by the Diane Ballweg Performance Fund with additional support from American Girl's Fund for Children, BMO Harris Bank, Dane Arts with 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. This project is also made possible by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts.



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V I S I O N 2 0 2 0

7:00pm Saturday, December 7, 2019
Middleton Performing Arts Center

PURCELL

Margaret Jenks, conductor
Sarah Gehrenbeck, piano
Eliav Goldman, teaching assistant

BRITTEN

Randal Swiggum, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano

HOLST

Margaret Jenks and Randal Swiggum, conductors

THE MADISON BOYCHOIR



Magno gaudens gaudio (sung in Latin)

Magno gaudens gaudio nostra puericia
Psallat cum tripudio propter hec natalia!
Ad onorem innocentum sonent lire timpana.
Lete mentis argumentum cantus sit et organa.

Refrain: Iure festi cum celesti curia
Gratulemur et letemur, eya!
Nostra sint familia iocus et Leticia,
Risus pax et gracia cum perenni gloria.

Gaudeamus, pueri, Herodes defunctus est.
Facti sumus superi hostis noster victus est
penam ferens infernalem surgere non poterit
Et nos agnum immortalem sequimur quo ierit.

Anonymous 12th century

*Rejoicing with great joy, let our company of boys
Celebrate with song and dance this anniversary feast!
In honor of the Innocents let harps and drums sound.
Let songs and instruments bear witness to a happy mind.*

*Rightly festive, with the court of heaven
Let us rejoice and be merry. Eya!
Let our family of boys be made up of games and gladness,
Laughter, peace, and grace, to eternal glory.*

*Let us rejoice, boys! Herod is dead!
We have conquered, our enemy is overcome.
Suffering eternal torment, he will not rise again,
And we shall follow the immortal Lamb wherever he may go.*

Imagine a few leaves of parchment folded together, poorly written, decayed by dampness, marred by stains and the ravages of time. *Magno gaudens* comes from such a songbook, probably copied around 1200, but discarded within a generation or so and used as flyleaves for another book. This is fortunate, for by repurposing the paper (which was expensive), some unknown benefactor preserved for us over thirty medieval songs and poems. The songbook was then discarded and remained hidden for some six hundred years.

Most of the songs are associated with major liturgical festivals, especially those that fall during the very festive period between Christmas and New Year's. The tone of this song is joyful — suggesting great celebrations in the darkest, coldest, and deadeast time of the year.

We know that the song was typically sung by boys because of its opening line. We also know the occasion: the Feast of Innocents (December 28) which marks Herod's massacre of children to destroy the Christ Child. Did they dance to it? Sing it in processional? We don't know for sure. But we do know that boys, far from their families and hometowns, growing up in a cathedral choir school or monastic institution certainly formed their own little "family" characterized by "games and gladness, laughter, peace, and grace." Each week on Monday nights, we recreate a little version of that "family" in the boychoir.

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PURCELL



Hashivenu
(sung in Hebrew)

Traditional Israeli song
Arranged by Doreen Rao

*Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return to You.
Renew our days, as of old. (Lamentations of Jeremiah 5:21)*

The prophet Jeremiah (c.650-570 BCE) watched as Jerusalem was destroyed and his people were taken captive by the Babylonians. He himself was exiled to Egypt but he continued to call the Jews to repentance, true worship, and social justice. His words, including “Hashivenu,” are still recited as part of the readings for Tisha B’Av, the day in the Jewish calendar which recalls the destruction of the temple and the exile of the Jews. When the reader reaches this verse—the second to last verse in the book—he pauses, and the congregation recites it in unison. Then it is sung, to a haunting melody like this one, as the scroll is returned to the Ark.

Simple Song (from Mass)

Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)

Gabriela Ruíz, flute

“Simple Song” (or “not so simple song,” as we in Purcell often called it) is part of a visionary conception by a composer that had a great knack for pushing the boundaries of musical expectations. When one hears the word “mass” in a musical context, the expectation is for a Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, etc.. When composers wrote musical masses, there was room for lots of creativity, but not generally in terms of lyrics or subject matter. Bernstein’s *Mass* has some of the traditional Catholic Mass components, but then so much more. It is described as a theater piece for singers, players, and dancers—like religion mashed with a rock concert, a poetry slam, and a musical.

The seemingly “Simple Song” begins simply enough with an open G and D (played by guitar in the orchestration). That same interval begins the piece, but even in the introduction, the tune is muddled by tonal ambiguity and the feeling that everything is shifting and it could modulate to just about anywhere. The resulting sound is not chaotic, but rather like the meandering thoughts and conversation that might happen in an improvisatory conversation.

Walking in the Air (from *The Snowman*)

Howard Blake (b. 1938)

The illustrator artist Raymond Briggs produced the well-loved book, *The Snowman* in 1978—a wordless book drawn only with crayon pencils that captures a wide range of complex emotions through tender pictures. Howard Blake took the story and emotions that Briggs presented visually and envisioned the musical score that brought this book to the screen in 1982. Like the book, the entire story is still told without words. Blake sonically portrays the anticipation, wonder, impatience, playfulness, awe, and grief in the story as magically as Briggs does with his pencil crayons. The only words in the entire score happen as the snowman and the boy fly on a magical midnight ride.

Only a few boys were familiar with the story, so we examined the text and imagined how it might transfer to images. The boys made their own sketches of the vision that they had from the text and musical sounds. The clear, easy, floating melodic line and magical sounding minor tonality as well as the “hovering” feeling of the tune inspired the boys’ visions.

While Blake moved from the visual to the aural, Purcell moved from the aural to envision visual art. After they had their vision, we compared this to Briggs original artwork that inspired the music. We loved this imaginative way to explore artistic vision as a composer, visual artist, and performer!

BRITTEN



The Ride-By-Nights

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
Poem by Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

The expert noticer might hear that this piece operates on several levels of complexity. On the surface, it seems to be about witches careening through the sky on broomsticks. But further examination reveals that the text is really a “tour” of constellations in the night sky, including Charlie’s Wane (the Big Dipper), Draco the Dragon, Leo, Sirius, and Orion. But there’s even more: the voice parts unfold in close canon, as if they are chasing and teasing each other, and each musical phrase is based on the same descending five-note motif. And finally, the piano part is completely independent, offering no real support for the voices except a rhythmic rumbling and tweeting. This piece continues a fifteen year tradition of Britten performing a piece by their namesake composer on every concert.

October’s Party

Elam Sprenkle (b. 1948)

On the surface, this poem by American poet George Cooper (1838-1927) seems to be a fanciful children’s story about autumn leaves who hold a fancy ball. But every

line is crafted—with wit and whimsy—to make us see something mundane and familiar (a swirl of leaves in the wind) with new eyes. This is, of course, one of the powers of a great poem—to help us see something differently. Hopefully autumn 2019 was slightly different for the Britten boys, as we pledged to each pay close attention and find our favorite, most colorful tree.

Besides an imaginative perspective on autumn leaves, the poem gently explores another theme: the simple human joy of being together at a party where all is joy and affection, and the guests leave reluctantly after a jolly “hands around” circle.

Mein gläubiges Herze (My believing heart) (sung in German)

J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Simon Johnson, solo cello; Eric Miller, continuo cello;
Oliver Cardona, oboe; Dexter Mott, violin

Mein gläubiges Herze,	<i>My believing heart,</i>
Frohlocke, sing’, scherze!	<i>delight, sing, play!</i>
Dein Jesus ist da!	<i>Your Jesus is here!</i>
Weg Jammer, weg Klagen,	<i>Be gone, sorrow! Be gone, lamenting!</i>
Ich will euch nur sagen:	<i>I say to you simply:</i>
“Mein Jesus ist nah.”	<i>“My Jesus is here.”</i>

One of Bach’s happiest creations, this piece was originally a soprano aria in Cantata 68, first performed in May 1725 in Bach’s church in Leipzig. The sprightly cello part sings a completely different melody than the voice, in a sparkling duet. The piece seems to be in standard ABA form, with the B section exploring the darker harmonies of “sorrow” and “lamenting.” But just when the piece seems to be over, the most amazing surprise occurs. Suddenly there appears a solo violin and oboe, who have been silent throughout! Along with the cello they form a trio which explodes in joyful counterpoint. There is no other piece like this in the Baroque repertory—Bach had a completely new “vision” of how to use instruments in a new, unexpected way.

HOLST



Freedom is Coming

South African freedom song

In the hopeless days of apartheid and its oppression, there were songs of hope—songs that cast a vision of a different South Africa that had no certain future. These visionary songs have remained in the repertory; this is one of the most well-known examples.

Psallite
(sung in German and Latin)

Michael Praetorius (1571-1621)

*Sing out! Jesus, only begotten son of God,
our redeemer Lord and little boy, appears in a manger.
A little child lies in the manger.
All the loving little angels serve the child and sing beautifully to him.*

This Renaissance piece, with macaronic text (in two languages) has a bell-like opening and simple, folk-like melody. Praetorius was part of a musical “new vision”: amateurs could sing sacred songs, at home, in the vernacular style of rustic dance music.

Aglepta

Arne Mellnäs (1933-2002)

Swedish composer Arne Mellnäs composed this one-of-a-kind piece in 1969 for a composition competition (it won). The text comes from a 19th century Swedish troll proverb:

“To leave an enemy without an answer, say these words to him: Aglaria pidhol garia ananus qepta, and blow in his direction. Then he will not know which way he is headed and cannot answer you.”

The composer breaks the text into phonetic fragments, and uses avant-garde techniques to explore nearly everything the human voice can do: sing, speak, and whisper. Much of the piece is aleatoric, giving the singers freedom to choose their own pitches and timing, but within a tightly controlled (and challenging) musical framework. This was Holst’s exploration of what “visionary” meant in choral music in the mid-20th century.

THE MADISON BOYCHOIR



Rise Up, O Flame

Christoph Praetorius (d. 1609)

Rise up, O Flame! By thy light glowing show to us beauty, vision, and joy.

A haunting 17th century canon, which we first learned at our fall camp, became the material for our own “vision” of a piece never before performed: our own arrangement using voices and instruments and all the compositional devices we tried.



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VISION 2020

3:00pm Sunday, December 8, 2019
Middleton Performing Arts Center

CHORALIERS

Lisa Kjenvet, conductor
Joseph Ross, piano

CON GIOIA

Carrie Enstad and Marie McManama, conductors
Vincent Fuh, piano

CAPRICCIO

Lisa Kjenvet, conductor
Joseph Ross, piano

CHORALIERS



O Music

Lowell Mason (1792-1872)

*Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may return to You.
Renew our days, as of old. (Lamentations of Jeremiah 5:21)*

Lowell Mason has long been regarded as the father of American public school music education. In 1838, due to his clear vision, Mason convinced the Boston schools to include vocal music as an essential part of the school curriculum. O Music has a simple, mostly stepwise melody, organized in three four-bar phrases, that is sung in canon and celebrates the joy of singing.

Ombra mai fu (sung in Italian)

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Never was a shade of any plant dearer and more lovely, or more sweet.

Commonly known as “Largo of Love,” Ombra mai fù is the opening aria in the 1738 opera *Serse*. The opera itself was a complete failure and only ran for five performances. This was due in large part to the innovative nature of the work which, unlike Handel’s other operas, included comic elements. It was only much later on in the 19th century that “Ombra mai fù” was rediscovered, and is now known as one of Handel’s most famous and popular vocal works. The aria is sung by the character Xerxes I of Persia, who sings about the admiration and love he has for the shade of the plane trees.

Ton Thé (sung in French)

Traditional French song
Music by Jeanne and Robert Gilmore
Arranged by Susan Brumfield

Ian Disjardin, xylophone

“Ton Thé” is a well-known French tongue-twister which translates as, “Your tea? Has it removed your cough?” Louisiana music teachers Jeanne and Robert Gilmore set the text to a simple melody based on the major scale and included it in *Chantez, Encore!*, a collection of folk songs meant to reintroduce the French language and culture into Louisiana schools. Essentially a nonsense song, Brumfield’s arrangement allows the singer and listener alike the freedom to form their own perception about the piece and revel in its playful sounds.

CON GIOIA



Wo der perlende Wein im Glase blinkt (K 347) (sung in German)

W.A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Where the sparkling wine flashes in the glass, there we'll stay!

What are familiar celebration songs and when do we use them? Why does singing “Happy Birthday” in a group feel so much better than singing it alone? We used this short Mozart canon to explore these ideas and understand their power. Mozart wrote many canons throughout his life for all instruments, some just as his own compositional exercises, some as parodies of other reputable composers, some as riddles where the performers had to figure out where they were supposed to enter without any indication from Mozart. Not much is known about how this canon came to be, but we discovered many intricacies that Mozart packed into this seemingly simple twelve measure composition.

Mille Cherubini in Coro (sung in Italian)

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
Arranged by Steven Mercurio

Daniel O'Dea, tenor

Sleep, sleep, dream, little loves
Sleep, dream, Put your head on my heart.

Solo:

A thousand cherubs in a choir smile in the heavens.
A sweet song caresses the hair
A hand that guides slightly through clouds of gold,
Dreaming and watching you, my treasure,
Protecting your journey.

For you, my treasure,
Protecting your journey.

Close your eyes, wait little angels,
Sleep, sleep, dream, little loves

When have you used something for a purpose other than that for which it was intended? What new meaning did it create? This is something we pondered as we studied Franz Schubert's *Wiegenlied* (Lullaby). Originally a setting of the poem “Schlafe holder susser Knabe” for solo voice and piano, fellow Austrian composer Alois Melichar set it for choir and orchestra in an Italian translation. Our version is an arrangement of that setting. While there is no mention of Christmas, Jesus, or even a baby in the text, it is often performed during the Christmas season.



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Star Carol
(sung in Italian)

John Rutter (b. 1945)

This carol by English composer John Rutter has become a contemporary choral classic. Set in strophic form, this invitation to worship the Christ child at the manger comes alive with the quickening lilt of the musical invitation to “Hurry to Bethlehem and see the son of Mary!”

CAPRICCIO



Lumen
(sung in Latin)

Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)

*Lumen accipe et imperti. Do ut des.
Receive the light and pass it on. I give that you may give.*

These two Latin aphorisms are of unknown date and origin, but the first (Lumen accipe et imperti) is a motto for many schools around the world, “light” being used as a metaphor for knowledge or understanding. The composer created the music to sound like one part is “teaching” the next by using musical imitation, or echo. Imagine the light growing stronger and stronger as it passes from singer to singer, starting with small intervals and gradually expanding into larger leaps and longer scales.

Laudamus Te (from Gloria)
(sung in Latin)

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741)

We praise you, we bless you, we worship you, we glorify you.

Born in Venice, Antonio Vivaldi was an Italian composer and violinist of the Baroque period. Although Vivaldi was an ordained priest, it was as a musician that he excelled and made his career. Most of his sacred music, including this lively and joyous duet, was written during his time as the maestro di violino at the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls which trained the musically gifted. In this third movement of the *Gloria*, Vivaldi leads us through a series of modulations with elaborate melismas and chains of suspensions in the vocal lines, held together by a constant three-note motive in the accompaniment.

The Lake Isle of Innisfree

Eleanor Daley (b. 1955)

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

*And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.*

*I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the deep heart's core.*
— William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

The Lake Isle of Innisfree is perhaps the best known of all Yeats' poems and it has made Innisfree, a tiny island in Lough Gill in County Sligo, Ireland, a place of pilgrimage. Written in 1888 when he was living in London, Yeats longed for the beauty and simplicity of the place where he spent his summers as a child. The poem is personal and yet speaks to the universal desire for peace and tranquility, emphasizing the ability of nature to restore the human spirit.

On Children

Text by Kahlil Gibran
Music by Ysaye M. Barnwell (b. 1946)

Dr. Ysaye Barnwell is best known as a former member of the internationally acclaimed a cappella ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, with whom she recorded and performed from 1979 to 2013. As artists and cultural activists, the members of Sweet Honey in the Rock compose, arrange and perform songs with powerful messages about the world we live in, speaking against oppression of all types. *On Children* is an adaptation of a poem from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*, a book of poetic essays that discusses issues of life and the human condition. The song explores parenthood, reminding us that the gift of life is precious and urging us to approach parenting with understanding and compassion.

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7:30pm Sunday, December 8, 2019
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CANTILENA

Margaret Jenks, conductor
Andrew Johnson, piano
Eliav Goldman, teaching assistant

RAGAZZI

Michael Ross, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano
Eliav Goldman, teaching assistant

CANTABILE

Michael Ross, conductor
Steve Radtke, piano
Eliav Goldman, teaching assistant

CANTILENA



Wenn die Klänge nahn und fliehen (Opus 113, No. 7) Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
(sung in German)

*When the tones come near and then flee in waves of sweet desire,
Ah, how often yearns the heart the heart, in loneliness, for deeper melodies.*
— (J. von Eichendorff)

These lines, a short part of a longer poem, beautifully capture the tumultuous, messy, and sometimes lonely life of an visionary artist. The melodic shape is that of continuous waves until the final line, which sits on a single pitch--unmoving against the changing harmony, like a persistent desire that can't be silenced. The end of this short piece is not grand nor satisfying, but wistfully incomplete.

Stavasi il mio bel Sol
(sung in Italian)

Maddalena Casulana (1544-1590)

*My beautiful Sun was sitting in the sun,
that finds no equals, (though now one and then the other tries),
Loosening his blond hair, golden like heaven,
he mirrored himself in the face of my Sun,
and in that mirror he reflected himself so beautiful,
that it seemed to my Sun to be the sun. -- (G. Strozzi)*

Maddalena Casulana was the first published female composer at a time when many women were confined to domestic and social roles that had little to do with their creative or intellectual capabilities. Casulana was not unaware of the fact that she was breaking with the norms of the time and as she was publishing her first full volume of madrigals (which she dedicated to Isabella de' Medici), she shared these thoughts:

"I know truly most excellent Lady, that these first fruits of mine, flawed as they are, cannot produce the effect that I desire, which would be in addition to providing some evidence of my devotion to Your Excellency, also to show the world the futile error of men who believe themselves patrons of the high gifts of intellect, which according to them cannot also be held in the same way by women. Because of all this, I did not wish to fail to publish them, hoping that in Your Excellency's bright name they would achieve such light as might kindle some other, higher talent to succeed more clearly in that which except for the spirit, I have not been able to show."--Venice, April 10, 1568.

from Your Excellency's most humble servant,
Maddalena Casulana.

Casulana reminds us that it is not always necessary for our contributions to be perfect or for our vision to be refined for it to be shared. She published so that others--maybe even those who might be more skilled--would know what is possible. We are honored to have the opportunity to learn from a woman whose ideas and bold thinking inspire us over 400 years later and to share her vision.

RAGAZZI



The Roadside Fire (*from Songs of Travel*)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

*I will make you brooches and toys for your delight
Of bird-song at morning and star-shine at night,
I will make a palace fit for you and me
Of green days in forests, and blue days at sea.
I will make my kitchen, and you shall keep your room,
Where white flows the river and bright blows the broom;
And you shall wash your linen and keep your body white
In rainfall at morning and dewfall at night.
And this shall be for music when no one else is near,
The fine song for singing, the rare song to hear!
That only I remember, that only you admire,
Of the broad road that stretches and the roadside fire.
— Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)*

From a song-cycle based on the volume of poems by Robert Louis Stevenson of the same name, “The Roadside Fire” begins with a piano accompaniment evoking the bubbly delight of new love. The final section takes the celebration of love to a “shout it from the rooftops” sort of level before ending in a more personal, private manner.

Song of Peace

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)

American composer Vincent Persichetti’s work spans many musical mediums; he wrote works for piano, instrumental solos, symphonies, and major works for concert band. Here he weaves a simple melody throughout, treating it as if it were a literal plea for peace.

O welche Lust (*from Fidelio*) (sung in German)

Ludwig Van Beethoven (1770-1827)

*Prisoners: Oh what joy, in the open air, freely to breathe again!
Up here alone is life! The dungeon is a grave.*

*(Solo/section): We shall, with all faith, trust in the help of God.
Hope whispers softly in my ears.
We will be free. We will find peace.*

*Prisoners: O Heaven! O Rescue! What fortune!
Oh freedom--will you return?*

*(Solo/section) Silence! Don’t make any noise!
Eyes and ears are overhearing us!*

*Prisoners: Oh what joy, in the open air, freely to breathe again!
Up here alone is life! The dungeon is a grave.*

Beethoven--the visionary, the tortured composer--wrote only one opera. *Fidelio* premiered on November 20, 1805. It tells the story of how Leonore, disguised as a prison guard (named Fidelio) rescues her husband Florestan from death in a political prison. In this chorus, the prisoners are given temporary reprieve, seeing daylight in the garden for the first time. They fluctuate between incredible outward joy and the need to keep quiet, lest they be overheard by the prison warden.

CANTABILE



Amarilli (sung in Italian)

Guilio Caccini (1551-1618)

*Amaryllis, my love--do you not believe, my heart’s desire, that you are my love?
Believe it--and if fear assails you, doubt not its truth.
Open my breast and see it written on my heart.
Amaryllis, Amaryllis, Amaryllis, is my love.*

Caccini was part of a new movement of monody (solo song) in the 16th century that set secular texts to music. It was a precursor to the modern art song, works that set significant poetry with piano accompaniment that mirrors the text. Caccini uses rising melodic fragments to capture the passionate intensity of the pleading “Amaryllis, Amaryllis, Amaryllis.”

Its Motion Keeps

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

Marie Pauls, viola

*My days, my weeks, my months, my years
fly rapid like the whirling spheres.
Time, like the tide, its motion keeps
Still, I must launch through endless deeps.*

Cúnnla
(sung in Gaelic)

Traditional Irish folk song
Arranged by Michael McGlynn

Joe Bernstein, bodhrán

Who is that down there knocking the (stone) walls?
“Me, myself” says Cúnnla.
Who is that down there pulling the blanket off me?
“Me, myself” says Cúnnla.
Who is that down there tickling the soles of my feet?
“Me, myself” says Cúnnla.
Dear Cúnnla, don’t come any nearer to me!
“My soul, I will!” says Cúnnla.

This Gaelic folk song is about a house spirit or ghost named “Cúnnla.” Typical of children’s stories meant to scare (and teach a lesson), this one uses repetition to build suspense and a surprise ending.

COMBINED CHOIRS



Russian Peasant Songs
(sung in Russian)

Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971)

Dayfdd Bevil, Sarah Gillespie, Spencer Koscik, Devin Morrison, horns

I. On Saint’s Day in Chigisy
Near the Savior’s church in Chigisy, across the Yauza River (Glory! Glory!)
There the wealthy farmers live (Glory! Glory!)
They rake up gold by the shovelful (Glory! Glory!)
They gather up puer silver by the basketful (Glory! Glory!)

III. The Pike
A pike came from Novogrod (Glory!)
It dragged its tail from the White Lake (Glory!)
Its scales are of silver (Glory!)
They are gilded with gold (Glory!)
Its back is braided with pearls (Glory!)
Its head is studded with pearls (Glory!)
And in place of its eyes are precious diamonds (Glory!)

IV. Master Porthy
Mastery Porthy ventured out into the turnip patch
(Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory!)
Out of Master Porthy burst a pound of lice
(Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory!)
A pound of lice and a half-pound of fleas
(Glory, glory, glory, glory, glory!)

“I am not a composer of music, I am an inventor of music.”--Igor Stravinsky

When we think of musical visionaries, Stravinsky’s name rises to the top. With ground-breaking works like *The Firebird*, *The Rite of Spring*, and *Les Noces*, his name became synonymous with revolutionary artistic thought. Though these four pieces are extremely short in comparison to the aforementioned works and thus easy to overlook, one musicologist describes them as the “essence” of Stravinsky’s visionary work and notes that the “modal and rhythmic ideas are as concentrated as densely as dwarf star’s matter”.

Stravinsky married borrowed texts that were part of an old fortune-telling ritual with original melodic and rhythmic material that imitates the sound and feel of Russian folk music, but with slightly different rhythmic, melodic and harmonic ideas that are fully reflective of both the past and the 20th Century. In our choirs, we have appreciated the quote by Paul Griffiths from his book, *Stravinsky* that refers to these four songs as “futuristic photographs of something ancient.”

Apple-Tree Wassail

Traditional British carol
Arranged by Stephen Hatfield

Wassail comes from the Anglo-Saxon *wes hael*— to be healthy. Originally, wassails were taken seriously as blessings on farms and farmers that would help ensure the health of the coming year. “Apple-Tree Wassail” comes from the cider country of Devon and Somerset, where it might be sung in the orchards or at the farmer’s door. The references to “lily white pins” and “lily white smocks” are meant to flatter the farmer’s family by listing the fine clothes and ornaments they could supposedly afford to wear. (Program notes by the arranger.)

Jingle, Bells

John Pierpont
Arranged by David Wilcocks

The comma in the title isn’t a misprint--Pierpont’s beloved melody is a command given by riders of a horse-drawn sleigh, compelling their horses’ bells to jingle (so they wouldn’t run into another rider). His simple melody is one many know by heart, possibly learned to play on the piano or another instrument, and have sung countless times.

If you’ve never read Robert Fulghum’s compelling short biography of the composer, it’s worth the read. John Pierpont tried many things--and was a failure at them all. His memorial stone reads, “Poet Preacher Philosopher Philanthropist” (four things at which he was unsuccessful in his professional life). But as Fulghum writes in his book, *It Was On Fire When I Lay Down On It*:

“To write a song that stands for the simplest joys, to write a song that three or four hundred million people around the world know, a song about something they’ve never done, but can imagine, a song that every one of us large and small can hoot out the moment the chord is struck on the piano, and the chord is struck in our spirit, well, that’s not failure!”

We agree--that’s truly not failure. That’s vision.



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Christ Presbyterian Church

A community centered in Christ, gathering in love, growing by grace, going forth to serve

Sunday Worship

9am Classical • 11am Contemporary

CPC is honored to welcome
MYC singers, families and
directors for weekly rehearsals
beginning January 2020!



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