

The Space We Keep

>Welcome, from Heather Mitchell

I warmly welcome you to this afternoon's performance of The Space We Keep.

It has been my great fortune to be enveloped within the Mendelssohn Chorus for the past 5 seasons, and to have been given the opportunity to shine and grow here. To say that MCP has been one of the most significant sources of joy in my life would not be an understatement. The roars of laughter in rehearsals are as equally beautiful to my ears as the chorus's singing. The camaraderie, the potluck lunches, the clinking beer (and wine and whisky!) glasses, the phone calls, the learning, the walks, the traveling, the hard work, the shared feelings, the comforting, the asking, the answering... are all as equally beautiful to my ears as the chorus's singing, and they are what I will always find space to keep in my heart.

While I did not imagine leaving the Mendelssohn Chorus, life sometimes makes plans for us. I'm thrilled to be the newest Artistic Director of The Master Chorale of Tampa Bay, but having to say "see you later" (not goodbye) to MCP will not be something I do easily, and I will always find space to keep them in my life. Today marks my last programmed performance with the Mendelssohn Chorus, and this repertoire is my love letter to them:

Dear Dominick DiOrio, Flo Gardner,
Ting Ting Wong, and the Chorus,

[Hymn to the Eternal Flame](#) - you are forever
woven into my fire.

[Gartenlieder](#) - you help me stay grounded and
connected to what's important.

[Only in Sleep](#) - I'll forever cherish our time
together.

[Modimo](#) - how fun it is to be with you!

[Even When He is Silent](#) - your hope and
desire for a better tomorrow inspires me.

[The Passing of the Year](#) - time is fleeting, but
forever worthwhile.

[A Clock Without a Craftsman](#) - you still take
my breath away.

[As Torrents in Summer](#) - I marvel at your
musicianship. You are fountains of joy.

[O Danny Boy](#) - true love never dies.

[Make Our Garden Grow](#) - you always do

the best you know. And you'll always make
your garden grow.

Yours,
Heather

And you, dear audience member, are just as much a part of this journey and experience. We wouldn't be doing what we do without your joy, your curiosity, and your support. Through this music, I invite you to consider what parts of your life you keep space for. You, too, will continue to do the best you know, and you'll always make your garden grow.

Thank you for being here and for holding space in your life for us. It means the world.

With sincerity and love,
Heather Mitchell
Associate Artistic Director and Director of Operations

| The Program

Gartenlieder, Op. 3 (1846)

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

1. Hörst du nicht die Bäume rauschen
(Do you not hear the trees rustling)
text by Johann von Eichendorff
Matt Lista, conductor

2. Schöne Fremde
(Beautiful strange lands)
text by Johann von Eichendorff
Matt Lista, conductor

3. Im Herbste
(In Autumn)
text by Ludwig Uhland
Byron De Leon, conductor

4. Morgengruss
(Morning's greeting)
text by Wilhelm Hensel
Byron De Leon, conductor

5. Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald
(In the evening, the forest is already rustling)
text by Johann von Eichendorff
Carmen Ramirez, conductor

6. Im Wald
(In the forest)
text by Emmanuel Geibel
Carmen Ramirez, conductor

Program Notes

Text

| Program Notes



Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel, sketch by Wilhelm Hensel

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1895–1847) was four years older than her brother Felix, and like him, a virtuoso pianist, excellent conductor, and an enormously talented composer. She was his closest musical confidant, and they sent each other their works for review, and often made revisions based on the other's comments.

Both Fanny and Felix were precocious talents and received their musical training on an equal footing, studying piano with the highly regarded teacher Burger, and composition and theory with Zelter, himself a student of Kirnberger, Sebastian Bach's most distinguished student, and conductor of the *Singakademie Berlin*, the city's most acclaimed chorus. Fanny took to

composition with as much enthusiasm as Felix, writing 30 *lieder* (songs), 16 piano works, piano arrangements of the Act I Finale of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, a string orchestration of an aria from Rousseau's *The Village Fortuneteller*, and a number of a *cappella* choral pieces in her first two years of study. Before her untimely death of a stroke at age 41, she had written nearly 500 compositions – songs, choral pieces, solo piano music, chamber music, and even a few large scale works for chorus and orchestra. Sadly, only a handful of her compositions were published during her lifetime.

When she was fifteen, she wrote to her father, Abraham, about her desire to pursue music more seriously like Felix. While Abraham was proud of Fanny's accomplishments, he was very traditional about gender roles, and replied rather harshly that music could only be an “ornament” for her, and that a woman's only profession was to be a wife and mother. Fanny apparently continued to press Abraham, because he wrote her a few years to reinforce his comments. Throughout her life, she struggled to balance the conventional expectations of a woman in a wealthy family and her desire to make an impact as a musician.

The one area in which Fanny could display her musical talents was in the salon. Musical salons were a tradition in her mother Lea's family – great aunts Sarah, Fanny and Cäcilie hosted influential salons, and Lea followed suit in 1819 with “Winter's Evening Music.” Both Felix and Fanny were featured as performers, although it was Felix's music that was largely performed. Fanny took over the salons, now branded as Sunday Music, in 1831, and she set very ambitious programs. The musicians rehearsed on Saturday evenings for the next day's salon, and she maintained a professional level of performance. She immediately formed a choir, which she directed. She often borrowed the theatre orchestra, which she conducted in large scale performances of concert versions of opera, or Felix's oratorio *St. Paul*, or (a favorite) his cantata *Die Erste Walpurgisnacht* (The First Witches' Sabbath). She featured her own music as well – songs, choruses, piano pieces, chamber music, even her large scale works for chorus and orchestra. She became a very highly-regarded musician. She was invited to be soloist in a performance of Felix's *Piano Concerto No. 1* at a charity concert, her only public appearance. She was invited to consult with the conductor for the Berlin premiere of *St. Paul*. The composer A. B. Marx asked her advice about setting part songs for men's chorus. Publishers began to contact her about publishing her work.

Felix had persuaded Fanny to allow him to publish six of her songs under his own name in his Op. 8 and 9 sets of Twelve Songs of 1826-27. While he readily admitted which ones were hers if it came up, she otherwise got no credit for the pieces. In 1836, she was invited by a German publisher to submit one of her songs for a collection of *lieder*. Felix did not recommend she start publishing, although he wrote to Lea that he would fully support her efforts if that's what she decided. She did submit a song, and after the collection was published, Felix wrote back from Leipzig that it was good she had ignored his

advice. Her song was wildly popular, easily the best in the collection, and Robert Schumann, editor of the influential *Neue Musikalische Zeitung* (New Music Newspaper) was an ardent fan.

Despite that success, it would be nearly another ten years before she began serious work on publishing her music. In 1846, she put together a set of lieder, negotiated with two publishing houses, and received very favorable terms. She only wrote to Felix after the fact, and he set her a warm letter of congratulation. Her *Six Songs for Voice With Piano Accompaniment*, Op. 1 was published in August, 1846. Before her death in 1847, she had published seven collections of music, including the *Gartenlieder* (Garden Songs), Op. 3. Felix was devastated by her sudden passing and perhaps regretted not being more supportive of her desire to publish. He gathered enough of her music to create four more collections and sent them to his publisher. He only survived Fanny by six months before succumbing to a stroke himself.

In 1825, the Mendelssohns had moved into a new, much larger house – three stories in front, with wings on either end, extending back and linked by the Garden House. On one side, the Garden House formed a courtyard where Lea entertained. The other side looked over a 5-and-a half-acre garden, really more of a park, with avenues and copses of trees, lawns, and flower beds. It was like being able to step from the house into the forest, and it became Fanny's favorite place. The Garden House featured a large room in the middle, the Garden Hall, which looked out over the garden through a colonnade fitted with removable glass windows, and the Sunday Music was held there. When Fanny married court painter and portraitist Wilhelm Hensel in 1829, they moved into the Garden House. The *Gartenlieder* were inspired by that garden and are her only set that is given a specific place name rather than a generic one. She even included *Im Herbste* (In Autumn) in the set because of the line "Over there, from the Garden Hall, I hear joyous strings resounding," coincidentally reminiscent of the salons.

Fanny began composing part songs in earnest in early 1846, completing at least 18 by late summer. The first few she composed may have suggested the garden theme, but many of the pieces had a sylvan or outdoor text, and she tried out at least 11 songs at the Sunday Music. The only piece that was probably composed specifically for the project was *Morgengruss*, with a text by her husband Wilhelm, an enthusiastic amateur poet. The last piece included in the *Gartenlieder* set, *Schöne Fremde* (Beautiful Strange Lands), was not written until July 22, hard on the August deadline from her publisher. Like Felix, she was a serial reviser, and there were a number of changes between her autograph score, the vocal parts that were sung at the Sunday Music, and the final print version. She also very carefully vetted the texts, sometimes substituting words which sounded better when sung, and sometimes even changing the meaning, substituting more positive phrasing for what had been ambiguous in the original. Her garden was a place of joy (*frische Lust*) and rest (*Ruh*) where you could feel at home (*zu Hause*) beneath rustling trees

(*rauschen Bäume*) and twinkling stars (*funkeln Sterne*). As with many composers, Fanny's music disappeared when tastes changed, only to be rediscovered a century or so later, and the *Gartenlieder* has become one of her most beloved and frequently performed works.

| Gartenlieder

1. Hörst du nicht die Bäume rauschen

Hörst du nicht die Bäume rauschen
Draussen durch die stille Rund?
Lockts dich nicht, hinabzulauschen
Von dem Söller in den Grund,
Wo die vielen Bäche gehen
Wunderbar im Mondenschein
Und die stillen Burgen sehen
In den Fluss vom hohen Stein?

(Don't you hear the trees rustling
Outside through the surrounding stillness?
Aren't you tempted to listen
Down from the balcony to the ground,
Where the many streams flow
Wondrously in the moonlight,
And the quiet castles look
Into the river from the high rock?)

Kennst du noch die süssen Lieder
Aus der alten, schönen Zeit?
Sie erwachen alle wieder
Nachts in Waldeseinsamkeit,
Wenn die Bäume träumend lauschen
Und der Flieder duftet schwül
Und im Fluss die Nixen rauschen,
Komm herab, hier ist's so kühl.

(Do you still remember the sweet songs
Of the beautiful olden days?
They all come awake again
At night in the solitude of the forest,
When the dreaming trees listen
And the lilac gives out a sensuous perfume
And in the river the water-sprites murmur,
"Come down, it's so cool here.")

– *Lockung* (Enticement), Joseph von Eichendorff
from *Gedichte, 2. Sänglerleben* (Poems, 2. A Singer's Life) (1837)

2. Schöne Fremde

Es rauschen die Wipfel und schauern,
Als hielten zu dieser Stund'
Um die halbverfallenen Mauern
Die alten Götter die Rund'.

(The treetops rustle and tremble
As if at this very hour
Round the half-fallen walls
The old gods were circling.)

Hier unter den Myrtenbäumen
In heimlich dämmernder Pracht,
Was sprichst du wirr wie in Träumen
Zu mir, phantastische Nacht?

(Here under the myrtles
In secret twilight splendor
What are you saying in dreamlike confusion
To me, fantastic night?)

Es funkeln mir zu alle Sterne
Mit glühendem Liebesblick,
Es redet trunken die Ferne
Wie vom künftigem, grossem Glück!

(All the stars twinkle at me
With love's ardent glance,
Far-off lands speak drunkenly
Of future great fortune!)

– *Schöne Fremde* (Beautiful Foreign Lands), Joseph von Eichendorff
from *Gedichte, 1. Wanderlieder* (Poems, 1. Songs of Travel) (1837)

3. Im Herbste

Seid gegrüsst mit Frühlingswonne,
Blauer Himmel, goldne Sonne!
Drüben auch aus Gartenhallen
Hör' ich frohe Saiten schallen.

(Greetings to you with Spring's delight,
Blue heavens, golden sun!
Over there, also, from the garden hall
I hear joyous strings resounding.)

Ahnest du, o Seele wieder
Sanfte, süsse Frühlingslieder?
Sieh umher die falben Bäume!
Ach, es waren holde Träume.

(Do you sense once more, O soul,
Gentle, sweet songs of spring?
Look around at the dun-colored trees!
Ah, they were lovely dreams.)

– *Im Herbst* (In Autumn), Ludwig Uhland
from *Gedichte* (Poems) (1815)

4. Morgengruss

Schnell fliehen die Schatten der Nacht,
hell blühen die Matten in Pracht,
hoch rauschet der Wald in dem Glanze,
still lauschet ihm heimlich die Pflanze
im blütenverklärenden Tauen,
wie selig, den Morgen zu schauen.

(The night's shadows quickly flee,
The meadows bloom brightly in splendor,
Up above, the forest murmurs in the radiance,
The plants listen in secretive silence,
In dew that transfigures its blossoms;
How blessed to behold the morning.)

Was fehlt noch dem goldenen Raum?
Komm, Liebchen, erfülle den Traum,
mein Lied tönt in wonnigem Rauschen,
o komm, wie die Blume zu lauschen,
es will dich mein liebendes Sehnen
betauen mit seligen Tränen.

(What more does the golden realm lack?
Come, my love, fulfill the dream,
My song sounds forth in blissful murmur,
O come, listen like the flowers,
My passionate yearning wishes
To bedew you with blessed tears.)

– *Komm* (Come), Wilhelm Hensel (ca. 1846)

5. Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald

Abendlich schon rauscht der Wald
Aus den tiefen Gründen,

Droben wird der Herr nun bald
An die Sternen zünden,
Wie so stille in den Schlünden,
Abendlich nur rauscht der Wald.

(In the evening the forest already murmurs
From the depths of the land.
Above, the Lord will now soon
Set fire to the stars.
How quietly in the abysses,
In the evening the forest only murmurs.)

Alles geht zu seiner Ruh,
Wie die Welt verbrause,
Schauernd hört der Wanderer zu,
Sehnt sich tief nach Hause,
Hier in Waldes grüner Klause
Herz, geh' endlich auch zur Ruh!

(All goes towards its rest,
As the world becomes calm;
Trembling, the wanderer listens,
Yearning deeply for home.
Here in the forest's green cloister,
Heart, go also at last to rest.)

– *Abschied* (Farewell), Joseph von Eichendorff
from *Gedichte*, 6. *Geistliche Gedichte* (Poems, 6. Sacred Poems) (1837)

6. Im Wald

Im Wald, im hellen Sonnenschein
Wenn alle Knospen springen,
Dann mag ich gerne mittendrein
Eins singen.

(In the forest, in the bright sunshine,
When all the buds spring forth,
Then I would gladly in their midst
Be singing.)

Wie mir zu Muth in Leid und Lust,
Im Wachen und im Träumen,
Das stimm' ich an aus voller Brust
Den Bäumen.

(How I feel in sorrow and joy,
In waking and in dreaming,

I sing forth with a full heart
To the trees.)

Und sie verstehen mich gar fein,
Die Blätter alle lauschen,
Und fall'n am rechten Orte ein,
Mit Rauschen.

(And they understand me full well,
The leaves all listen,
And join in at the right place
With rustling.)

Und weiter wandelt Schall und Hall,
In Wipfeln, Fels und Büschen.
Hell schmettert auch Frau Nachtigall
Dazwischen.

(And sound and echo travel further
In treetops, crag, and bushes,
Lady Nightingale also warbles brightly
In their midst.)

Da fühlt die Brust am eignen Klang,
Sie darf sich was erkühnen --
O frische Lust: Gesang! Gesang
Im Grünen!

(There the heart feels from its own sound
That it may venture something —
O fresh joy: Singing! Singing
In the countryside.)

– *Im Wald* (In the forest), Emanuel Geibel
from *Gedichte* (Poems) (1840)

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Hymn to the Eternal Flame (2005)

Stephen Paulus

from To Be Certain of the Dawn
text by Michael Dennis Browne
Rachael Lipson, soprano
Heather Mitchell, conductor

Program Notes

Text

| Hymn to the Eternal FLame

Every face is in you,
Every voice,
Every sorrow in you,
Every pity,
Every love, every memory,
Woven into fire.

Every breath is in you,
Every cry,
Every longing in you,
Every singing,
Every hope, every healing,
Woven into fire.

Every heart is in you,
Every tongue,
Every trembling in you,
Every blessing,
Every soul, every shining,
Woven into fire.

– Michael Dennis Browne (2005)

| Program Notes



Composer Stephen (left) and librettist Michael Dennis Browne

Hymn to the Eternal Flame is an excerpt from the Pulitzer Prize-nominated *To Be Certain of the Dawn*, the 2005 Holocaust memorial oratorio written by composer Stephen Paulus and librettist Michael Dennis Browne. It was jointly commissioned by the Basilica of St. Mary and the Minnesota Orchestra on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi death camps and the 40th anniversary *Nostra Aetate*, the Vatican II document that condemned blaming the Jewish people for the death of Christ.

Stephen Paulus (1949–2014) was a prolific and highly influential composer of music that spanned multiple genres. He received his BMus degree in piano performance and his PhD in composition from the University of Minnesota. He composed some 55 orchestral works, served as composer-in-residence with the Minnesota Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Tucson Symphony Orchestra, and Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, and received a Grammy nomination for his *Concerto for Two Trumpets and Band*. He composed 12 operas, the most famous being *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, one of several commissions from the Opera Theater of St. Louis. However, he is probably best known for his more than 400 pieces of choral and vocal music, including the Grammy-winning cantata *Prayers and Remembrances* and the exquisite, frequently performed *Pilgrim's Hymn*, from his opera *The Three Hermits*.

Paulus was a passionate advocate for composers and in 1973 co-founded the Minnesota Composers Forum with Libby Larsen as a service organization creating performance opportunities outside the academic setting. It became so successful that in 1996 it was rebranded as the American Composers Forum, and is the largest composer service organization in the country, supporting a large number of grant, networking and mentorship opportunities. Paulus was

also one of the first composers to self-publish his music and gain control of his catalog. He fashioned Paulus Press into a durable organization which has kept his music catalog still available ten years after his death.

English-born Michael Dennis Browne (b. 1940) is a poet, librettist and educator who has been Paulus's collaborator since his graduate school days. They have produced 18 works together, ranging from anthems to cantatas to operas. Browne did his undergraduate studies in foreign languages at Hull University in Yorkshire. After a stint of teaching English in Finland, he was accepted as a Fullbright Scholar, and he studied at the University of Iowa, where he earned his Master's Degree in English. He eventually obtained a faculty position at the University of Minnesota, where he taught for 39 years and is now an emeritus professor. He has received numerous awards and prestigious fellowships, and has published 15 collections of poetry, including two books of lyrics. Browne had already worked as a librettist and was looking for a musical collaborator when he arrived at Minnesota. He approached Dominick Argento, who recommended Paulus, one of his grad students. Their first collaboration was Paulus' dissertation composition, *Canticles: Songs and Rituals for Easter and the May*.

The driving force behind the commission of *To Be Certain of the Dawn* was Father Michael O'Connell, rector of the Basilica of St. Mary. He had developed a close relationship with the rabbinate at Temple Israel – Minneapolis, which led to a number of interfaith activities and his conviction that the Christian community needed to be more proactive in commemorating the Holocaust and its lessons. Commissioning a work of music seemed the ideal vehicle.

Much of Browne's inspiration for the libretto came from a visit to Yad Vashem, the memorial to the victims of the Holocaust in Jerusalem. The approach to the Children's Memorial is lined with stelae, broken off randomly and symbolizing the lives who were broken off too early in the death camps. The memorial contains pictures of some of the 1.5 million children who perished in the camps. A taped recording lists names, ages, and place of death for each of the victims; it takes three months for the tape to repeat. The memorial is lit by five candles, reflected over and over in the mirrored wall, the fire a symbol that is repeated in *Hymn to the Eternal Flame*.

One of the themes in *To Be Certain of the Dawn* is the shared humanity that links all people. The phrase "You should love your neighbor as yourself" is repeated four times throughout the oratorio, variously in Hebrew, German and English. It comes from Leviticus, chapter 19, which deals with how people should treat each other, and is a key tenet of the Jewish faith. Jesus quotes it in the lead-up to the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Matthew, and it has a similar importance in the Christian faith. Paulus had composed probably the most beautiful melody in the oratorio for that text, and it is a feature which helps unify the work.

Browne relates that he had written mostly blank verse in the libretto when suddenly a strophic text came to mind while he was driving, and he struggled to write it down with one hand while trying to drive with the other. The repeating structure easily lent itself to a hymn, and in a stroke of compositional mastery, Paulus was able to fit that “Golden Rule” melody to Browne’s words. The text speaks of how everything that makes us human, that everyone shares, is woven into that spark of fire that animates us all, an understanding that creates both regret for the past and hope for the future.

Only in Sleep (2012)

Ērik Ešenvalds

text by Sara Teasdale
Sophia Santiago, soprano
Byron De Leon, conductor

Program Notes

Text

| Program Notes



Photo by Jurgis Rikvellis

Latvian composer Eriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977) earned his MM degree in composition from the Latvian Academy of Music, where he now serves on the faculty. He sang with the award-winning State Choir Latvja for ten years and spent two years as a Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, Cambridge University. While he is still best known for his choral compositions, his portfolio includes large scale orchestral music, chamber music, works for solo instrument, opera, film scores and theatrical music. His music has been featured on more than 50 recordings, and has received commissions from choruses and orchestras around the world.

He has explained his compositional style: “For me, harmony is most important – how it flows and becomes a new harmony. The melodic line is secondary. Perhaps this is because my ear is trained primarily to perceive harmonies. Nevertheless, I don’t want to write simple music... It is important for me to create sounds I truly feel. I conclude that I am constantly changing, searching for new paths, but absolutely not, once I have found them, mass producing them.”

Only in Sleep was commissioned in 2010 by the University of Louisville Collegiate Chorale and Cardinal Singers, and was featured on the 2015 Gramophone Critics' Choice Award-winning album *Northern Lights* on the Hyperion label. Ešenvalds took his text from a poem of the same name by Pulitzer Prize-winning American poet Sara Teasdale, published in her 1920 collection *Flame and Shadow*. It is a short poem, simple in construction, dealing with the intersection of memory and dream. Ešenvalds rearranges some of the text to first create the setting for the story, and then provide the specifics. His musical setting opens with a soprano solo and a beautiful but simple melody reminiscent of a children’s song, with the chorus humming underneath in soft, dreamy, ever shifting chords. A middle section, containing the evocative text “Only in sleep Time is forgotten,” is richly harmonized, but again set simply in a homophonic fashion. The opening music is reprised for the final verse, fading away at the end as the soprano solo repeats the last words over and over again, like the end of a dream.

| Only in Sleep

Only in sleep I see their faces,
Children I played with when I was a child,
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.

Only in sleep Time is forgotten —
What may have come to them, who can know?

Yet we played last night as long ago,
And the doll-house stood at the turn of the stair.

The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,
I met their eyes and found them mild —
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,
And for them am I too a child?

— Sara Teasdale
from *Flame and Shadow* (1920)

Notturmo, H. 337 (1838)

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel

Ting Ting Wong, piano

Program Notes

| Program Notes



Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel in 1842
Portrait by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim

The nocturne as a characteristic piece for piano was invented by the Irish piano virtuoso and composer John Field (1782–1837), whose style and compositions influenced a generation of composers in the mid-19th century, including Felix and Fanny Mendelssohn. He composed and published 18

nocturnes, beginning in 1814. They generally featured repeated arpeggios (broken chords) in the left hand which harmonically supported an expressive melody line in the right hand.

Fanny Hensel's 1838 *Notturmo in G minor, H. 337* is a wonderfully constructed piece that displays her superb compositional skills. It opens with a beautiful cantabile melody that moves through various keys into a development section, where shorter fragments form the bulk of the musical material. The melody is reprised, only to move again into a modulatory section from which it now emerges in G major, and the melody is carried forward in that key to a delicate and quiet ending.

Like the vast majority of Hensel's compositional output, the *Notturmo* was not published in her lifetime. It has been recorded and released on at least 14 albums and has become one of Hensel's most popular and highly regarded piano works.

Modimo (2019)

Traditional Sesotho / isiZulu
arr. Michael Barrett

Heather Mitchell, djembe
Carmen Ramirez, conductor

Program Notes

Text

| Program Notes



South Africa-born Michael Joseph Barrett (b. 1983) is an internationally known conductor, composer, arranger and educator. As a boy he attended the Drakensberg Choir School and sang in the highly regarded Drakensberg Boys Choir. He studied both European and South African music and had the opportunity to learn indigenous languages including isiZulu (as the language of the Zulu people is properly called) and Xhosa, with its distinctive click consonants. He attended the University of Pretoria, earning his BMus and MMus in Performing Arts and his DMus in Choral Conducting, and singing with the award winning TUKS Camerata (TUKS is a colloquial name for the University, derived from the initials of its original name in Afrikaans). He returned to the University, joining the music faculty, where he served Director of Choral Studies, and he conducted the TUKS Camerata from 2013–2025. He is currently a Research Associate in the Department of Music, and Executive Director and principal conductor of the Capital Singers, South Africa's largest community chorus.

Barrett is best-known for his arrangements of traditional South African music. He explains that the idea of cultural appropriation is absolutely foreign to South Africans. As part of the recovery from decades of apartheid segregation, South Africans consider themselves a multi-cultural nation, and cultural and ethnic traditions belong equally to all South Africans as long as they are treated respectfully.

Modimo is a fusion of the music of two South African peoples and sung in two languages: Sesotho, the language of the Sotho peoples of Lesotho, and isiZulu, the language of the Zulu peoples of KwaZulu-Natal, adjacent territories and related peoples, one now an independent nation and one a province of South Africa. "Modimo" is the Sesotho name for the supreme deity, creator of the universe and omnipotent, but formless and without gender. With the arrival of Christianity, it was easy enough to transfer that name to the Christian concept of God as a way of retaining existing cultural identity. *Modimo* explores two prominent features of South African music, repetition and layering of voices, instruments or melodic lines. At one point, Barrett demonstrates the layering, with each voice part sequentially adding its own part in the melody. The music is exuberant, highly rhythmic, and unabashedly joyful.

| Modimo

Text in Sesotho

Modimo
re boka wena
Tsothle di entswe ke wena

(God
we praise you
Everything is created by you)

Text in isiZulu

Wanyamalala umthwalo wezono zami

(He took away my burden [sins])

Even When He Is Silent

Kim André Arnesen

Matt Lista, conductor

Program Notes

Text

| Program Notes



Photo by Ule Wuttudal

Norwegian composer Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980) began studying piano at age five, became a chorister in the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir at ten, and was a fan of MTV and The Cure, which may explain his eclectic musical interests which range from the baroque to contemporary classical and popular music. He completed his musical education at the Music Conservatory in his native Trondheim and had his first composition performance in 1999 with the

Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir. While he has recently released several CD recordings of his piano music on the Decca label, he is best known for his choral music. The CD release of his first large-scale work, the 2010 *Magnificat*, commissioned and premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir and the string ensemble Trondheim Soloists, was nominated for a Grammy. With the availability of his music on streaming services, his fame as a composer has reached far beyond Norway. He has received commissions from the Minnesota-based National Lutheran Choir, the Manhattan Girls' Choir, the Texas-based Southwestern University Singers and the BBC Singers, and he has served as composer-in-residence for the Denver-based Kantorei Singers.

Even When He Is Silent was commissioned in 2011 by the St. Olaf Festival in Trondheim. The commission called for an *a cappella* choral piece in two versions, one set for SATB choir and one set for SSAA choir. Arnesen chose a well-known text, short but very moving, by an unknown Jewish writer and found inscribed on a wall during World War II. If you look up the text, you will find a bewildering number of origin stories – it was found in Cologne, or Warsaw, or Auschwitz, written in a safe house or the ghetto or a death camp, and sometimes conflated with the story of Anne Frank. It was as if there were an Ur-story somewhere which had been changed and elaborated with each retelling. Everett Howe, a Unitarian Universalist minister who holds a Ph.D. in mathematics and writes choral music, decided to research the original story and eventually found it in a June, 1945 article on Catholic resistance to the Nazis in Cologne, published in the *Neue Zürcher Nachrichten* (New Zurich News).

The story begins with the Catholic Scouts. In the nineteenth aughts, a number of scouting organization sprang up in western Europe in imitation of Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts, including one sponsored by the Catholic Church. With the rise of Nazism in Germany, the only youth organization that was allowed was the Hitler Youth. By 1937, all scouting associations had been subsumed into the Hitler Youth, and the Catholic Scouts were driven underground. In Cologne, a group of Catholic Scouts had discovered an abandoned network of tunnels under some old buildings and decided they would make a good refuge for those trying to hide from the Gestapo. The unnamed reporter who wrote the article visited one such shelter and found it furnished with a kitchen, bedroom, living room, books, oil lamps and even a radio. But meals could only be cooked and the lamps lit at night to avoid smoke alerting the Gestapo. Food was provided out of the meager rations of volunteers. He was told that at one time there were nine Jewish refugees there who stayed for four months without being discovered, but their ultimate fate was unknown. And he saw written on one of the walls this text, "*Ich glaube an die Sonne, sei es auch dunkel, ich glaube an Gott, mag er auch schweigen, ich glaube an Nächstenliebe, obwohl sie sich nirgends zeigen darf,*" (I believe in the sun, even when it is dark, I believe in God, even when He is silent, I believe in man's love for his fellow man, even when it can never be revealed.)

Compared to the usual translation – I believe in the sun even when it's not shining, I believe in love even when I feel it not, I believe in God even when He is silent – the original text contains more context. The writer believes in the sun even in the darkness in which the refugees had to live for much of the time. And he uses the word *Nächstenliebe*, literally love of neighbor – strangers providing him with refuge and food. Christians recall the phrase “love your neighbor as yourselves” from Jesus’s parable of the Good Samaritan in the gospel of Luke, but Jews would have known the same phrase from two passages in Leviticus in which they are strongly enjoined to do just that.

What the usual lyric loses in context, it gains in the sense of universality which makes it such a compelling text. Everyone can place their own nuances and interpretations into the text. Arnesen explains his interpretation in his program notes: “Imagining what the person [who wrote the text] went through makes the words so powerful. As I read them, it is a Credo – when everything is dark and difficult in life, you might wonder where God is, or if God is there at all. This is about keeping faith in God, love and hope. I think of the sun as a metaphor for hope.”

Arnesen’s exquisite but relatively simple setting matches the simplicity of the text. Most of the text is homophonic, with the voices moving together, and the short melodic phrases are simple, if sometimes thickly harmonized. There is a touch of word painting at the end, where the phrase “He is silent” is repeated over again, ever more softly until it almost vanishes. *Even When He Is Silent* has become one of Arnesen's most widely known and widely performed works.

| Even When He Is Silent

I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.
I believe in love even when I feel it not.
I believe in God even when He is silent.

– paraphrase of text written on the wall of a cellar in Cologne where Jewish people were hidden during World War II

The Passing of the Year (2000)

Jonathan Dove

Ting Ting Wong, piano
Heather Mitchell, conductor

Ting Ting Wong, piano
Heather Mitchell, conductor

1. Invocation
text by William Blake

2. The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun
text by William Blake
Monica Isomura, alto
D'quan Tyson, tenor

3. Answer July
text by Emily Dickinson

4. Hot sun, cool fire
text by George Peele

5. Ah, Sun-flower!
text by William Blake

6. Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!
text by Thomas Nashe

7. Ring out, wild bells
text by Alfred Lord Tennyson

Program Notes

Text

Program Notes



Photo by Marshall Light Studio

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959) is a composer best known for his operatic, choral and vocal music. After studying composition at Cambridge, he worked as a freelance accompanist, arranger and répétiteur. In 1987, he joined the staff at the Glyndebourne Opera, where he got his first professional compositional projects – a trio of community operas and an *al fresco* wind octet to entertain picnicking audiences before a performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro*. He crafted wonderfully conceived reorchestrations of standard operas for chamber-sized forces for touring companies, including a remarkable version of Wagner's complete Ring Cycle performed over two nights with just 18 players. Dove received international acclaim for his 1998 comic opera *Flight*, commissioned by Glyndebourne and based on the true story of an Iranian who was stranded in Charles de Gaulle Airport for 18 years. Since then, he has composed nearly 40 operas and stage works, 70 choral pieces, and numerous orchestral works. He won Ivor Novello Awards for his operas *Itch* and *Uprising*, and was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2019.

The Passing of the Year was written in 2000 on commission by the London Symphony Chorus. Dove set seven diverse poems, which he repurposes as an abbreviated journey through the seasons. He explains the structure of the piece: "The seven poems that I have set in *The Passing of the Year* make up three 'movements'. The first looks forward to summer, beginning with a line from Blake ('O Earth, O Earth return!'). 'The narrow bud' comes from Blake's *To Autumn*, but is a description of summer; the rapid questions of 'Answer July' suggest the quickening senses, the excitement of everything bursting into life, and summer's triumphant arrival. The second section follows the passing of summer. It begins in sultry heat, with a song from the opening scene of Peele's *David and Bethsabe* ('Hot sun, cool fire'): a girl bathing in a spring feels the

power and danger of her beauty. The section ends with the sense of mortality the Autumn brings: 'Adieu! Farewell earth's bliss', from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, heralds the death of summer. The cycle ends in winter, on New Year's Eve with a passage from Tennyson's *In Memoriam*." The song cycle is dedicated to the composer's mother, who died young, and was in part inspired by the Thomas Nashe poem *Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!* with its evocative line "Brightness falls from the air."

The Passing of the Year is set for double choirs and piano, and Dove is able to create an enormous range of color and texture by combining and recombining his forces in wonderfully varied and imaginative ways. He creates dialogs between the choirs, either as ensembles or just with selected voices, all supported by a relentlessly virtuosic piano part. The music is highly rhythmic, and he often contrasts the rhythms between ensembles or individual voices. Sometimes the melodic lines are contrasted, or richly harmonized, and sometimes Dove expands their harmonic sound by setting the choirs in two different keys a major second apart. He deftly matches the music to both the sound and the meaning of the texts – the quick, staccato dialog in Dickinson's *Answer July*; the palpable, languid, stultifying heat and aleatoric singing like the buzzing of insects in Peele's *Hot sun, cool fire*; the soft, dirge-like *Adieu! farewell earth's bliss* with its insistent repetitions of "Lord, have mercy" and the exuberant, joyful *Ring out, wild bells*, rushing to replace the pains and sorrows of the old year with the promise of the new, "a thousand years of peace."

| The Passing of the Year

1. Invocation

O Earth, O Earth, return!

– William Blake

from *Introduction to the Songs of Experience* (1794)

2. The narrow bud opens her beauties to the sun

'The narrow bud opens her beauties to
The sun, and love runs in her thrilling veins;
Blossoms hand round the brows of Morning, and
Flourish down the bright cheek of modest Eve,
Till clust'ring Summer breaks forth into singing,
And feather'd clouds strew flowers round her head.

'The spirits of the air live on the smells
Of fruit; and Joy, with pinions of light, roves round
The gardens, or sits singind in the trees.'

– William Blake
from *To Autumn* (1783)

*Summer is icumen in
Lhude sing cuccu*

– 13th century English round

3. Answer July

Answer July –
Where is the Bee –
Where is the Blush –
Where is the Hay?

Ah, said July –
Where is the Seed –
Where is the Bud –
Where is the May –
Answer Thee – Me –

Nay – said the May –
Show me the Snow –
Show me the Bells –
Show me the Jay!

Quibbled the Jay –
Where be the Maize –
Where be the Haze –
Where be the Bur?
Here – said the Year –

– Emily Dickinson (ca. 1862)

4. Hot sun, cool fire

Hot sun, cool fire, tempered with sweet air,
Black shade, fair nurse, shadow my white hair.
Shine, sun; burn, fire; breathe, air, and ease
Black shade, fair nurse, shroud me and please me.
Shadow, my sweet nurse, keep me from burning;
Make not my glad cause cause of [my] mourning.
 Let not my beauty's fire
 Enflame unstaïd desire,
 Nor pierce any bright eye
 That wand'reth lightly.

– George Peele
from *The Love of King David and fair Bethsabe* (1588)

5. Ah! Sun-flower!

Ah Sun-flower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the Sun:
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done.

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow:
Arise from their graves and aspire,
Where my Sun-flower wishes to go.

– William Blake
from *Songs of Experience* (1794)

6. Adieu! farewell earth's bliss!

Adieu, farewell, earth's bliss;
This world uncertain is;
Fond are life's lustful joys;
Death proves them all but toys;
None from his darts can
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

Rich men, trust not in wealth,
Gold cannot buy you health;
Physic himself must fade.
All things to end are made,
The plague full swift goes by;
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

Beauty is but a flower
Which wrinkles will devour;
Brightness falls from the air;
Queens have died young and fair;
Dust hath closed Helen's eye.
I am sick, I must die.

Lord, have mercy on us!

– Thomas Nashe
from *Summer's Last Will and Testament* (1592)

7. Ring out, wild bells

O Earth, O Earth, return!

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

– Alfred, Lord Tennyson
from *In Memoriam, A. H. H.* (1849)

A Clock Without a Craftsman

premiere performance

Erik Potteiger

Heather Mitchell, conductor

Rachael Lipson, soprano

Erik Potteiger, bass

Ting Ting Wong, piano

Heather Mitchell, conductor

Program Note

Text



Composer, percussionist and MCP Section Leader Erik Potteiger composed *A Clock Without A Craftsman* specifically for performance on Associate Music Director Heather Mitchell's farewell concert with Mendelssohn Chorus. It was designed to be paired with Jonathan Dove's *The Passing of the Year*, and to harmonize with the rest of Heather's programming. Potteiger (b. 1994) is a commissioned choral, piano, and instrumental composer. His music has been recorded and/or performed by such ensembles as the Voces8, US Scholars, Constellation Men's Ensemble, Convoco and the Mendelssohn Chorus of Philadelphia. He is a current composer-in-residence with the professional choral ensemble Convoco and former composer-in-residence for 1080C Productions. His compositions have been featured as soundtracks in a variety of short films and independent film festivals (most recently *Key Rats* for the Miami Film Festival). Erik's diverse range of programmed and performed pieces have been broadcast on National Public Radio and recorded in NPR Studios. He lives in Philadelphia and divides his time between commitments as a composer, performer, producer, and music educator.

Potteiger has provided the following program notes: "I wrote the text for this piece with some of the following media inspirations regarding time: *Watchmen* (graphic novel & HBO season/soundtrack), *Lovecraft Country* (HBO season/soundtrack), *Hades 2* (video game/soundtrack), and the music of Tesseract, Radiohead and Nine Inch Nails. This composition was originally intended as a companion piece to be performed following Jonathan Dove's *The Passing of the Year*, another influence on this piece. The key relationship in the piano facilitates a fluid transition between the two works.

"*A Clock Without a Craftsman* functions as an atmospheric soundtrack-like dialogue between two soloists, each soloist representing one of two abstract roles searching for the present/presence: 1. Anxiety/subconscious fear of events we can't control in the future (baritone) and 2.

Depression/subconscious lamenting of events from the past we are unable to change (soprano).

"The soloist's texts occasionally overlap with alternate lyrics using archetypes, words and short phrases which connect their themes. Time is a blessing and a curse, a human construct yet an experience we all participate in daily. It is daunting to stay present, especially as the world gets louder and we further process all of the choices we have made and will make.

"The reset *a tempo* throughout this piece is intentionally one beat per second. It is intended to help feel an internal pulse while singing generally lyric, murky (yet sonically focused) atmospheric texture that comes and goes in its own fleeting moment in time. The SSAA chorus functions as a timbral extension of the piano accompaniment more so than a lyric character concept. The sections and subsections of the SSAA chorus act as a stereo effect in multiple instances using manipulation/syncopation with words and fragments. A spoken soloist speaks of a near future that is in our hands but quickly slipping from our fingertips; a prophetic yet cold and artificial perspective from the outside looking in."

| A Clock Without a Craftsman

1. Anxiety/subconscious fear of events we can't control in the future (baritone)
2. Depression/subconscious lamenting of events from the past we are unable to control (soprano)
- (3. SSAA chorus - atmospheric undertones)
4. Spoken narrative solo

(Tick tick tick)

Where are we?

I just had the same thought. Who are you?

I'm.. somewhere else,
Stuck between solstice and celestial shade,
Studying the horizon..

I've been looking down at my footprints walking through mist.
The people walk past like
shadows in the fog.

shadows in the fog.

(Fog)

I gaze at them nervously here
Yet I can't see you amidst this violet ethereal sphere.

Autumn nocturne decomposing,
I perpetually find myself near.

Always lost in time?

Unable to attain the sublime,

Looking ahead,

Looking back,

Presence slipping through my grasp,

Present slipping through my grasp,
Minutes conspiring to elapse,

A puppet that clearly sees the strings,

To endless monochrome nothingness it clings,

Suspended bouquets and laminated springs,

Studying the stars dusted old photographs,
The terra cotta clay upon the canvas of existence,
In which the divine leaves fingerprints and form,

Too preoccupied to act for assistance.
Simultaneous futility

Simultaneous fragility

Life (*Life/Death*) Death

Abstracts to the gods,

As mortality dissolves us to dust
Tossed upon the void winds (I trust),

Sequestered to purgatory's wanderlust.

A statue embedded within a marble slab of time

Being cautiously chiseled away at,

Unfolding now.
..Who are you?

I've been struggling to ask you the same thing but..

..I'm still trying to wrap my head around this new paradigm,
What can we do

Experiencing this moment anew
Together yet apart?

Together but apart?
An introspective gaze
Seeking unrelated space,

On the outside looking in,

A crystalline existence and intricate jewel,

Vast improbability often cruel,

Yet beautiful when humanity sees the grand design,

Instead of perceiving from a singular skyline.

(Breathe)

Leading us to calmer waters,
Dragged back from the past to the present,
It still takes your breath away.

Brought back from the future to the present
Remember to breathe today.

Cogs autonomously rattle onwards,
Attempting to overcome our societal aches,
A sliver of existence,
A framework for future mistakes,
Metronomically, minutes to midnight.
Satin grains of sand trickle through fingers of an hourglass,

Falling,

(Haphazard)

Disorganized consciousness,
But

But
perhaps things simply are,
Have always been,

(Will always be)

A clock without a craftsman,

A philosopher without a solution,

A crowning unlikelihood,
This moment in time,
Eclipsing us by.

This moment in time,
Eclipsing us by.

– Erik Potteiger

As Torrents in Summer

Sir Edward Elgar

from *King Olaf*

text by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

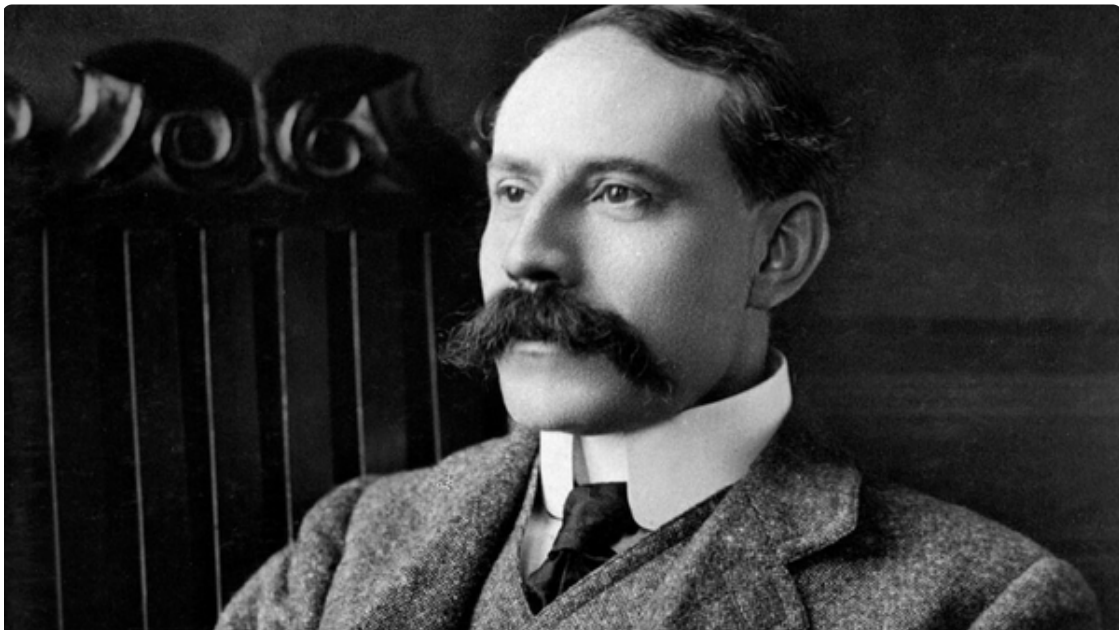
Ting Ting Wong, piano

Heather Mitchell, conductor

Program Notes

Text

Program Notes



Sir Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was a rarity, a composer of the 20th century (his first major success came in 1899) who was enormously popular, highly regarded, and totally self-taught. Elgar's father was an organist, violinist and

singer who operated a shop selling sheet music and instruments and who worked as a piano tuner. Elgar grew up in Worcester, a cathedral town in the English Midlands that had an active musical life. He began piano and violin lessons at eight and started writing music at ten, and like Britten, turned some of this early music into later compositions, in the case the two *Wand of Youth* orchestral suites. He was a good enough violinist that he contemplated a career as a soloist and studied with a teacher in London, but in the end decided that he lacked the necessary tone.

It's not clear why Elgar was uninterested in the Royal College of Music or the Guildhall School (he had set his sights instead on the Leipzig Conservatory), but the expense of a conservatory education was prohibitive, and at sixteen, he started his professional life as a freelance musician. He played violin and bassoon in local bands and orchestras, gave violin and piano lessons, and took on a conducting job with the attendant's band at the Worcester Lunatic Asylum, where he also wrote and arranged their music. He obtained violin positions with the Worcester and Birmingham Festival Orchestras and played for seven years with the William Stockley Orchestra in Birmingham, where one of his early works, the *Serenade mauresque* was premiered. His first important commission came in 1890 from the Three Choirs Festival, the concert overture *Froissart*. He began getting notice for the choral works he was writing for festival choirs – *The Black Knight* (1892) for the Worcester Festival, *King Olaf* (1896) for the Staffordshire Festival, *The Light of Life* (1896) for the Three Choirs Festival, and *Caractacus* (1898) for the Leeds Festival. But it was the *Engima Variations* in 1899 that first brought him lasting fame.

As Torrents in the Summer is the epilogue of Elgar's cantata *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*. The text is taken from Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1863 *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. Longfellow began the massive collection of poems in 1861 as an antidote for his grief over his wife's tragic death by fire and his son's injuries in the Civil War. A group of unrelated travelers find themselves at an inn and pass the time telling stories to each other. The travelers were all based on people known to Longfellow. The musician, who tells the tale of King Olaf, was Ole Bull, the famous Norwegian violinist and a close friend of Longfellow's. Olaf was the 10th century king who brought Christianity to Norway and founded the cathedral city of Trondheim. Longfellow, ever the scholar, used the 12th century Icelandic collection of sagas, *Heimskingla*, as his source material. There is a satisfying irony that Elgar, who was to achieve fame with a musical piece featuring disguised identities should choose this poem of Longfellow's, which also featured disguised identities.

As Torrents in Summer is a metaphor, that God, unperceived, fills men's hearts as the summer rain, falling far away at their source, fills dry river beds. Elgar's beautiful setting has a hymn-like quality, but also conveys a sense of wonder in the parallel phrases "that rain" and "that God" with their unexpected rising line and harmonic shift.

| As Torrents in Summer

As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling
Far off at their fountains;

So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to o'erflowing,
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not
That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining!

– Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Tales of a Wayside Inn, The Musician's Tale: The Saga of King Olaf, XXII. The Nun of Nidaros (1863)

O Danny Boy (1913)

Traditional
arr. Joseph Flummerfelt (1981)

text by Frederic Weatherly
Heather Mitchell, conductor

Program notes

Text

| Danny Boy

O Danny Boy, the pipes, the pipes are calling,
from glen to glen and down the mountain side.
The summer's gone and all the roses falling,
it's you, it's you must go and I must bide.
But come ye back when summer's in the meadow

or when the valley's hush'd and white with snow.
It's I'll be here in sunshine or in shadow,
O Danny Boy, O Danny Boy I love you so.

But when ye come and all the flow'rs are dying,
if I am dead, as dead I well may be.
Ye'll come and find the place where I am lying,
and kneel and say an "Ave" there for me.
And I shall hear though soft you tread above me,
and all my grave will warmer, sweeter be,
For you will bend and tell me that you love me,
and I shall sleep in peace until you come to me.

– Frederic Weatherly (1910)

| Program Notes

To American ears, *Danny Boy* sounds like the quintessential Irish song, but when Frederic Weatherly published it in 1913, he had no such intention in mind. Weatherly (1848–1929) was a barrister, writer and a prolific lyricist with some 3000 songs to his credit. He wrote *Danny Boy* in 1910 and set it to music, but it did not attract much notice. In 1912, Weatherly's sister-in-law, residing at that time in a mining town in Colorado, heard a striking tune, completely unknown to her. She obtained a copy of the music in manuscript and sent it to Weatherly, thinking he might be able to use it. Weatherly did not recognize the tune either, but he knew a first-rate melody when he heard it, and also realized it would fit both the text and the spirit of *Danny Boy*, and quickly published the reset version. Within a few years, the song had become internationally known and loved.

In the UK, *Danny Boy* was largely popularized by Elsie Griffin, a child prodigy as a singer with an impressive vocal range – at 18 she won a vocal competition as a mezzo and was later engaged by the D'Oyly Carte company as lead soprano in the coloratura roles. Weatherly sent Griffin a copy of *Danny Boy*, and she featured it during the four years she spent entertaining the British troops in France during World War I. The song became immensely popular with the troops. The lyrics about being separated from loved ones with the prospect of being reunited only in death also struck a sympathetic chord among the Irish, who had been emigrating in ever greater numbers since the mid-1800's (by 1890, fully half the people born in Ireland were living abroad). Perhaps *Danny Boy* got its official seal of approval as an Irish song from the famous Irish tenor John McCormack (1884–1945), who regularly included the song in his recitals along with authentic Irish folk songs and ballads (though he privately loathed the lyrics and even toyed with writing a new text). As an

indication of how quickly the music had spread, the first recording of *Danny Boy* was made by the famous Austrian-American opera and recital singer Ernestine Schumann-Heink in 1915, only two years after its first publication.

Weatherly soon learned that the mystery tune that had saved his *Danny Boy* lyrics was in fact a reasonably well-known Irish melody first published in 1855 in George Petrie's *Collection of the Music of Ancient Ireland*. The tune was collected by a Miss Jane Ross of Londonderry County from a blind fiddler, but surprisingly, she neglected to get the name of either song or fiddler. Petrie included the tune because of its beauty, breaking his own rule of only collecting tunes from singers, since he didn't trust harpers or fiddlers not to make melodic changes to show off their technique. The tune quickly became known as the *Air from Londonderry*, and by 1912 had already been used for quite a few songs and hymns, and even appeared in a typically eclectic piano harmonization by Percy Granger. Ross and Petrie believed the tune to be ancient, but no antecedent version has ever been uncovered. With a somewhat convoluted path of recasting the tune from 4/4 meter to triple meter and making some rhythmic adjustments, the *Londonderry Air* does resemble a tune collected by Edward Bunting in 1792 called *The Young Man's Dream*, which itself became the melody for Thomas Moore's popular *The Last Rose of Summer*, published exactly 100 years before *Danny Boy*.

The richly harmonized choral arrangement of *Danny Boy* performed at this concert was created by Joseph Flummerfelt (1937–2019) for the 1981 recording "The Westminster Choir Sings Folk Songs." It became a signature work for the ensemble and was performed frequently on tour. Flummerfelt was one of America's most highly regarded and influential choral conductors. He served on the faculty of Westminster Choir College for thirty-three years as director of choral conducting and conductor and artistic director of the Westminster Choir. He trained generations of singers and choral conductors, including Philadelphia Orchestra Artistic Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who called his sessions with Flummerfelt the only significant conducting lessons he ever had. Flummerfelt was director of choral activities at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC from 1971 to 2013 and held the same position at its Italian counterpart, the Festival dei Due Monde, from 1971 to 1993. He founded the professional ensemble New York Choral Artists in 1979 and conducted them until his retirement in 2016. Flummerfelt also served as the unofficial chorus master of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, preparing choruses for more than 600 concerts. Leonard Bernstein called him "the world's greatest choral conductor," and he was named *Musical America's* Conductor of the Year in 2004.

Make Our Garden Grow (1955)

Leonard Bernstein

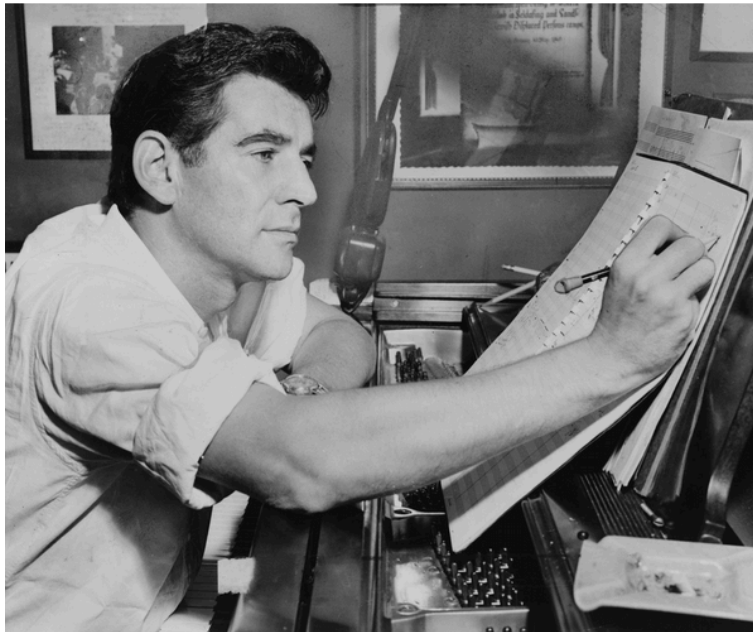
text by Richard Wilbur
Candide - Ian Martin, tenor
Cundegonde - Katy Avery, soprano
Old Lady - Sophia Santiago, soprano
Governor - D'quan Tyson, tenor
Maximilian - Erik Potteiger, baritone
Pangloss - Lucas DeJesus, bass

Ting Ting Wong, piano
Heather Mitchell, conductor

Program Notes

Text

Program Notes



Bernstein in 1955

Photo by Al Ravenna, World Telegram
Library of Congress

Leonard Bernstein (1918–1990) was a highly successful composer of music for both Broadway and for the concert hall. While many of his contemporaries dabbled in popular music, Bernstein threw himself enthusiastically into the genre. He had been interested in musical theater from childhood. During summer vacations, he mounted elaborate productions with other neighborhood children. As a summer camp counselor for swimming and music, he produced *The Pirates of Penzance* with his campers (and met long-time friend and

successful lyricist and playwright Adolph Green, who was dragooned into playing the Pirate King). In 1939, while at Harvard, he wrote incidental music for a production of Aristophanes' play *The Birds*, and followed that a year later with music for another Aristophanes play, *The Peace*.

Bernstein's first major success Broadway was the 1944 ballet *Fancy Free*, with a scenario and choreography by Jerome Robbins, then principal dancer of what would become the American Ballet Theatre. It was so popular that Green and his long-time professional partner Betty Comden turned it into a musical, *On the Town*, and enlisted Bernstein to write the score. This led to a series of musicals, including the Tony-winning *Wonderful Town* (again with Comden and Green) and *West Side Story* (with a then-unknown lyricist named Stephen Sondheim).

There is a wonderful freedom and lack of self-consciousness in Bernstein's Broadway music. It is energetic, lyrical and witty, and one might consider it his most representative music. While his concert music was certainly successful – his *Symphony No. 1 "Jeremiah"* won the New York Critics' Circle Award for best orchestral piece in 1944, and the recording of his *Symphony No. 3 "Kaddish"* won a Grammy in 1964 as best album – his most popular concert pieces today are the suites he extracted from *Fancy Free*, *On the Town*, and *West Side Story*, the overture to *Candide*, and the choral work *Chichester Psalms*, whose music is derived from his Broadway shows.

In 1955, Bernstein was engaged to write incidental music to Lillian Hellman's *The Lark*, her adaptation of Jean Anouilh's play of the same name. While they were wrapping up work on that play, she approached Bernstein to write incidental music for an adaptation of Voltaire's 1762 satiric comedy *Candide*. Bernstein persuaded her that it would work better as full-blown operetta. Voltaire's novelette satirized a number of contemporary institutions and ideas, most notably the Catholic church and the philosophy of Gottfried Leibnitz that we are living in the best of all possible worlds. Candide lives a life of insulated comfort, in love with Cunegonde and taught a *reductio ad absurdum* version of Leibnitz's philosophy by his tutor Pangloss. He loses his comfortable existence and in a series of misadventures narrowly avoids death by military execution, shipwreck, earthquake, burning at the stake by the Inquisition, and being cooked and eaten by a South American tribe who mistakes him for a Jesuit missionary. He is given a fortune which is quickly lost through duplicity. Reunited with characters from his former life, each much the worse for wear through their own mishaps, he eventually purchases a small farm and received the only good advice of his life from a Turkish neighbor: don't concern yourself with philosophy or your place in the world; it is enough to work your farm, which keeps you free of the three great evils of boredom, vice and poverty. Candide finally rejects Pangloss's philosophy and says "we must cultivate our garden."

The original version of *Candide* premiered in 1956 with mixed reviews. Hellman had reworked Voltaire's text to satirize contemporary institutions, most notably the House Un-American Activities Committee. While much of that material had been removed during previews, Hellman's somewhat didactic text did not mesh well with Bernstein's witty, sophisticated music. The show closed after two months and the work was withdrawn. The original cast recording, however, became something of a cult classic.

There have been many revised versions presented over the years. The most significant was created by Harold Price in 1973, with a pared-down, one-act book which emphasized the comedic material, with additional lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, and a new orchestration by Hershey Kay. It opened to rave reviews, ran for two years on Broadway, won five Tony awards and was nominated for four others. There were also several attempts to adapt it for opera, including a 1988 version for the Scottish National Opera, prepared in collaboration with Bernstein and which represents his final intent.

Make Our Garden Grow is the closing number of *Candide*, beginning as a duet between Candide and Cunegonde, and then adding the ensemble and finally the chorus. The beautiful, soaring melody represents their (and our) hope for the future.

| Make Our Garden Grow

Candide:

You've been a fool and so have I,
But come and be my wife,
And let us try before we die,
To make some sense of life.

We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;
We'll build our house and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.

Cunegonde:

I thought the world was sugar-cake,
For so our master said;
But now I'll teach my hands to bake
Our loaf of daily bread.

Candide & Cunegonde:

We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;
We'll build our house and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.

Ensemble:

Let dreamers dream what worlds they please;
Those Edens can't be found,
The sweetest flow'rs, the fairest trees,
Are grown in solid ground.

Ensemble & Chorus:

We're neither pure nor wise nor good;
We'll do the best we know;
We'll build our house and chop our wood,
And make our garden grow.

– Richard Wilbur (1955)