

University Choir University Singers

University Choir

Elizabeth Swanson, conductor

Brian Stone, conductor

Madeleine Vande Polder, collaborative pianist

Maria Wietrzynska, collaborative pianist

University Singers

Elizabeth Swanson, conductor

Emilie Bertram, conductor

Madeleine Vande Polder, collaborative pianist

7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 11, 2018

Grusin Music Hall

Imig Music Building



College of Music
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

CU ★ PRESENTS

Program

University Choir

The Word Was God

Rosephanye Powell
(b. 1962)

At the Round Earth's Imagined Corners

Willametta Spencer
(b. 1932)

I Will Be Earth

Gwyneth Walker
(b. 1947)

Anna Hansil and Michael Gaven, soloists

Past Life Melodies

Sarah Hopkins
(b. 1958)

Nicole Schneckenberger and Jack Gaffney, soloists

Daniel, Servant of the Lord

Undine Smith Moore
(1904–1989)

Sam Bruckner and John Lettang, soloists

Light of a Clear Blue Morning

Dolly Parton
(b. 1946)
arr. Craig Hella Johnson

Madison Hershiser, soloist

Piper Binkley, Laura Dixon, Anna Hansil, Batya King, Emily Majluf, small ensemble

Combined Choirs

The Cloths of Heaven

Mari Esabel Valverde
(b. 1987)

University Singers

Ajde Jano

Traditional Serbian
arr. Tina Harrington

Selections from In Caelis Personent

Isabella Leonarda
(1620–1704)
ed. Dale Heidebrecht

Alexis Cairy, mezzo-soprano soloist
Aaron Harp, bass soloist

Praise the Lord

Florence B. Price
(1887–1953)

I Should Be Glad

Susan LaBarr
(b. 1981)

Hummingbird

Jocelyn Hagen
(b. 1980)

Asha Romeo, soprano soloist
Natalie Buchholz, Alexis Cairy and Julieta Garcia, trio
Delaney Patrick, Kamryn Holland, Daniel Parks and Craig Robertson, quartet
David Landon, music electronics

Combined Choirs

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Elizabeth Poston
(1905–1987)

Program notes

The Word Was God

The Word Was God represents a musical word-painting of the creation. The text is from John 1:1-3. The opening is simple and represents the “nothingness” that existed before the world was created. The composer describes that the final section as representing creation being spoken into existence: six entrances of the text “In the beginning was the Word” each represent one day of creation as God created the world in six days (and rested on the seventh).

Rosephanye Dunn Powell is one of America’s premier composers of choral music. Her musical style features beautiful melodies, strong rhythms and rich harmonies often derived from African-American popular styles, as well as varied vocal textures including counterpoint. Powell is published by Hal Leonard, Fred Bock, Oxford University Press, Alliance Music Publications and Shawnee. In addition to composing, Powell serves as professor of voice at Auburn University. She holds degrees from The Florida State University, Westminster Choir College and Alabama State University.

At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners

At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners, composed by Williametta Spencer, was chosen as the winner of the 1968 Choral Competition of the Southern California Vocal Association. Spencer, a pianist, organist, educator, conductor and composer, received her PhD in composition from the University of Southern California and was chosen as a Fulbright Scholar, allowing her to study in Paris with composer Tony Aubin and pianist Alfred Cortot. The text of *At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners* is based on the Holy Sonnet VII by English poet John Donne (1572-1631), which expresses the author’s desire to learn how to repent so that he may earn his place in heaven.

I Will Be Earth

I Will Be Earth is a setting of a love poem by American poet May Swenson (1913-1989). Composer Gwyneth Walker is a popular American composer whose music is known for its beauty, energetic drive, accessibility, and occasional humor. Walker, a former faculty member of Oberlin College Conservatory, resigned from her position as a professor to become a full-time composer and to live on her beloved dairy farm in Vermont. Her compositional catalogue now contains over 350 works for choirs, solo voice and instrumental ensembles. Walker states that this composition “is intended to present the poem in a simple and straightforward manner which seeks to portray the beauty, humor, and passion of the words.”

Past Life Melodies

Sarah Hopkins is a renowned and respected Australian composer who has created a very distinguished place for her unique music on the world stage. The materials for *Past Life Melodies* evolved over a period of years, the process commencing well before [the 1991 commission] was requested.

The melodic ideas of the work, like those in all of Hopkins’ music, are simple in structure and reach deep into the soul. The first melody was one which haunted the composer for many years—a melody which came to her at moments of deep emotion. The second melody reflects her considerable interest in the music of various world cultures, and in this particular case her eight years of residence in Darwin in the north of Australia, where she had much contact with Australian Aboriginal art and music. The third section of the work utilizes a concept called harmonic-overtone singing, which is as ancient a technique as singing itself. Here the separate harmonic voices weave and dart like “golden threads” above the earthy drone sustained by the main body of the choir.

The richness and subtlety of colors and the earthy hearty quality of the voices, along with an inner

rhythm of very simple ideas and materials, offers the listener a communication with the very heart and soul of music itself.

—Program note by Stephen Leek © Morton Music

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord

Undine Smith Moore was a notable and prolific African-American composer of the 20th century. At the age of 20, Moore received a scholarship to Juilliard, where she graduated cum laude in 1926. Moore became a faculty member of Virginia State University in 1927, remaining there until her retirement in 1972, and co-founded the Black Music Center of Virginia State University in 1969. *Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord* is one of Moore's most well-known and loved compositions. Written in the tradition of the African American spiritual and dedicated to Moore's mother, *Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord* features the Old Testament passage (Daniel 6:16) of Daniel in the Lion's Den, portraying the story in a vividly dramatic manner.

Light of a Clear Blue Morning

The song *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* was first written by American entertainer, Dolly Parton, appearing on her 1977 album *New Harvest...First Gathering*. Parton stated in an interview that the song, which peaked at number 11 on the country music charts, was born from the pain of a break with her longtime musical and business partner, Porter Wagoner.

This version of *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* was arranged by Craig Hella Johnson, the Grammy-winning founder and artistic director of the Texas-based professional choral group, Conspirare. Johnson, a Minnesota native, studied at St. Olaf College, Juilliard and the University of Illinois, and earned a doctoral degree from Yale University. His arrangement of *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* has quickly become known in the choral cannon as a stunning piece of music that speaks to audiences

and singers alike through its simplicity, gradual build of energy, and clear depiction of the text.

The Cloths of Heaven

The Cloths of Heaven features the well-known poem by William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) and music by M.E. Valverde. Yeats was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1923. Valverde, a native of Texas, received her undergraduate education from St. Olaf College, studied at La Schola Cantorum in Paris, France and currently studies composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Regarding *The Cloths of Heaven*, Valverde states:

When I look back on the text, I find myself. I find sacrificial love that is beautiful, but also painful—a love that is certain but longs to break from its hopelessness and finally connect with bliss. I composed *The Cloths of Heaven* during a month of study in Paris, surrounded by the history and beauty of France. No matter the surrounding, this poem draws me fiercely inward.

—M.E. Valverde

Ajde Jano

Arranger Tina Harrington set two folk songs for unaccompanied choir that are commonly used as instrumental folk dances. *Ajde Jano* is a *kolo*, which is a line dance where the dancers hold hands side by side and turn their heads back and forth as if to talk and call to each other. Traditionally, the *kolo* is performed with a band made up of any combination of accordion, bass, guitar, flute, mandolin, violin and reed instrument, only sometimes with a singer. Although this combination greatly varies today, this unaccompanied arrangement is meant to imitate the whirling rhythms one would hear from a Serbian folk band. The bright vocal style is brash and free to help illustrate the raucous and spontaneous environment of a community gathering.

Translation:

Comon, Jana, let's dance the kolo.
Come on, Jana, come on sweetness.
Let's dance the kolo.

Come on Jana, let's sell the horse.
Come on, Jana, come on, sweetness.
Let's sell the house.
We'll sell them, just so we can dance.
We'll sell them, sweet Jana. Just so we can dance.

In Caelis Personent

Isabella Leonarda was a nun in the Collegio di Sant'Orsola in Bologna, Italy. She entered the convent at age 16, and rose to hold leadership positions within the convent and eventually in her order within the region. Records of her life and the convent were destroyed either during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) or during the Italian War for Independence (1848-1849). The few records that remain have led scholars to believe that the convent was likely an educational institution for young women. Leonarda was prolific for her time, composing over 200 pieces of music in 20 volumes.

In Caelis Personent could be considered a collection of eleven joined motets, of which six are being performed on this program. Each motet section is made clear by the change in voicing and texture changes. This is a marker of the baroque concertato style in which contrasting voicing and texture are the main indicator of a changing affect and attitude in the text. The text of *In Caelis Personent* seems to have been penned by Leonarda. At first look, it could be one of the commonly set Marian antiphons or odes, but much of Leonarda's music is in praise of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and does not line up with these Marian texts. It stands to reason then that she could have written the devotional text herself.

Translation:

CHORUS: Heaven's music resounds above the earth pleasing mankind who rejoice everywhere.

ALTO: Tuneful songs of voices and sweet songs trumpets join harmoniously in gratitude with harmony of the choir of the faithful who sing with joy.

CHORUS: O beautiful angels, O Mistress of Heaven, hear our prayers and supplication.
ALTO and BASS: God bestows grace to us, o thou fairest among women.

CHORUS: Accept our thanks that we pray, o thou fairest among women, graciously hear our prayer. If you want true peace in your heart then make Mary your leader.

BASS: Pour the source of sweetness over us and obtain eternal joy, Virgin of refuge.

CHORUS: Heaven's music resounds above the earth pleasing mankind who rejoice everywhere.

Praise the Lord

Praise the Lord is one choral anthem from a large catalogue of works composed by Florence B. Price. Price was the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major symphony orchestra. Having spent the majority of her professional life in Chicago, Illinois, it was the Chicago Symphony that played her Symphony in E minor in 1933. Her works include pieces for orchestra, choir, numerous solo songs, spiritual arrangements, chamber music, pieces for solo piano and organ. Much of her work still lies unpublished in the archives at the University of Arkansas, and thanks to Director of Choral Activities, Stephen Caldwell, for his editing of this wonderful work so that we might perform it today.

Praise the Lord is an anthem setting Psalm 117: "Praise the Lord, All ye nations; Praise the Lord, All ye Lands; Praise the Lord, All ye People. Praise the Lord for His merciful kindness is great toward us." Setting this brief verse requires the text be repeated, which, yields a declamatory style from the chorus. The melody moves smoothly between the various voice parts while the accompaniment punctuates and supports the abrupt harmonic shifts. This 3-minute piece illustrates Price's master-level musical craft.

I Should Be Glad

I Should Be Glad was commissioned in honor of the 60th anniversary of the Texas Choral Directors Association. The beginning of Susan LaBarr's musical setting of the poem by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933) reflects loneliness, isolation and vulnerability—feelings that many musicians come to experience throughout the course of cultivating one's artistic skills and coming to trust one's creative process. LaBarr's composition then expands from two to four to eight voice parts, showing how a solitary experience of artistry can grow into something that comes to enrich and strengthen human connections. An uplifting feeling of gratitude endures throughout the song, which ends with what LaBarr describes as a quiet prayer-like section, "I should be glad." LaBarr is a composer who lives and works in Springfield, Missouri. Her music has been published through Santa Barbara Music Company, Morningstar Music and Walton Music. Additionally, she works as editor of Walton Music.

Hummingbird

Hummingbird is a unique composition that resulted from a collaboration between Minnesota-based choral composer, Jocelyn Hagen, and Minnesota-based composer of electronic music, Spearfisher. Spearfisher composes electronic music and is a classically trained pianist. As a composer, his Solo Cello Piece was premiered by Cicely Parnas in The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

Hagen's compositional output is predominantly for the voice—solo, chamber and choral. Her music has been described as "simply magical" (Fanfare Magazine) and "dramatic and deeply moving" (Star Tribune, Minneapolis/ St. Paul). Her award-winning compositions have been performed all over the world, including Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City.

The poem, *hummingbird*, is by African American poet, Nikia Chaney. She is a founding editor of shufpoetry, an online journal for experimental poetry, and founding editor of Jamii Publishing, a publishing imprint dedicated to fostering community among poets and writers.

Hagen says the following of Chaney's poem: "The text of *Hummingbird* has been a challenge for me since day one. First off, there is a lot of it, so the music has to just keep going and evolving. There are also certain phrases that connect with me in a deep way, and bring with them a wide array of emotions: fear, doubt, uncertainty, hope. I think there are lots of possible meanings inside this poem, and I encourage you all to...listen to it, to see what meaning you derive from it."

Hummingbird was premiered by North Dakota State University Concert Choir (Jo Ann Miller, conductor). This evening's concert marks the first performance of this work since its 2017 debut. The collaborative process that is necessary between the performer of music electronics, singers, pianist and conductor provide abundant and rewarding opportunities for improvisation and interpretation.

Jesus Christ the Apple Tree

Elizabeth Poston was an English composer, writer and editor who attended and taught at the Royal Academy of Music with other English musical greats, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Peter Warlock. Her work ranged from radio and television scores to biographical and musicological writings. She composed scores for over 40 radio productions, including some in collaboration with C.S. Lewis, E.M Forster and Dylan Thomas. She has also been held up as a pianist, having premiered a number of works for solo piano and in chamber ensembles. *Jesus Christ the Apple Tree* is perhaps her most widely performed choral work, having received performances in the venerated King's College annual "Lessons and Carols" service in multiple years.

—Program notes by *Emilie Bertram, Brian Stone and Elizabeth Swanson*

Biographies

Emilie Bertram

Emilie Bertram is a second year DMA student in choral conducting at University of Colorado Boulder College of Music, currently acting as the co-conductor of both the CU Women's Chorus and the University Choir. Prior to beginning her doctoral studies, Bertram taught in public and private schools in Minnesota, New York and California for 10 years, instructing general, piano, vocal and choral music for students in kindergarten through collegiate level. While living in California, Bertram taught at Presentation High School in San Jose, where she conducted the Bella Voce Women's Chorus. Under Bertram's guidance, Bella Voce was invited to perform in San Francisco, Anaheim, Seattle, Vancouver, Ireland and New York City, and was a featured ensemble at the 2017 CA ACDA (American Choral Directors' Association) State Convention. Bertram holds a BM specializing in secondary vocal music education and piano from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, where she studied under Renee Clausen, and received an MM from the Ithaca College School of Music in Ithaca, New York, where she worked with Janet Galvan. She has sung as a soprano II with the Valley Concert Chorale, The Choral Project, Peninsula Cantare and CU Boulder University Singers. Bertram resides in Colorado with her husband and twin boys.

David P. Landon

David P. Landon is an artist, composer and new music performer. Native to California, where he studied both architecture and musical composition, Landon explores his role in each facet as the author of a complex set of interactions, and enjoys blurring the roles of the individuals involved at all levels. In each echelon, he seeks to understand the human response to those interactions in regards to both psychology and physiology. His musical focus is on interactive electronics, custom built instruments, sound installations, and sound sculptures. His compositions have been performed in the United States and abroad, the latest of which was performed at the International Saxophone Symposium in Croatia. Landon is co-founder of the MaXaS Improvisation Duo and is currently a doctoral candidate in composition at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Brian Stone

After 4 years teaching high school, most recently at Denver East High School, Brian Stone has returned to the University of Colorado Boulder to pursue a DMA in choral conducting and literature. At CU, Stone has

led the Collegiate Chorale and University Singers, and directs the vocal jazz ensembles. As a conductor outside of CU, Stone serves as music director of Cantabile Singers, a community ensemble in Boulder, and as choir director at First Unitarian Society of Denver. As a professional singer on the front range, Stone has performed with St. Martin's Chamber Choir, Anima Chamber Ensemble, Evans Choir and Voices of Light. Stone received his BM in voice performance from the University of Puget Sound and MM in choral conducting from the University of Colorado Boulder.

Elizabeth Swanson

Elizabeth Swanson is the associate director of choral studies and assistant professor of Conducting at University of Colorado Boulder. Swanson conducts the University Choir and teaches undergraduate courses in choral conducting and applied lessons in conducting at the graduate level. This semester, she is serving as the interim director of choral studies and conductor of the University Singers as Gregory Gentry, the director of choral studies, is on sabbatical leave. Prior to her appointment at CU Boulder, Swanson was an associate professor of music and director of choirs at Nyack College's campus in New York City. Under her direction, the Nyack College Chorale performed concerts in renowned venues such as David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and St. Paul's Chapel at Trinity Church Wall Street, and toured domestically. Throughout her tenure at Nyack College, Swanson taught courses in conducting, rehearsal methods, sight singing and music history. Swanson has also been the conductor of choral ensembles at the University of Chicago and North Park University, Roosevelt University (Chicago College of Performing Arts), and served as a sabbatical replacement at Ithaca College. Swanson is an active guest conductor, a presenter at national conferences and has been published in the Choral Journal. Her dissertation was a qualitative analysis of *August 4, 1964*, an oratorio by the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Steven Stucky, with an original libretto by Gene Scheer. Swanson earned degrees from Northwestern University (DM Conducting), Ithaca College (MM Conducting) and St. Olaf College (BM Vocal Education). Her primary conducting teachers include Anton Armstrong, Janet Galván, Robert Harris, and additional study with Cheryl Frazes Hill, Mallory Thompson and Victor Yampolsky.

Personnel

University Singers

Elizabeth Swanson, conductor

Brian Stone, conductor

Madeleine Vande Polder and Maria Wietrzynska, collaborative pianists

Soprano

Emilie Bertram
Natalie Buchholz
Emily Eck
Ali Keller
Emmi Lindsey
Delaney Patrick
Asha Romeo

Alto

Clare Berndt
Corie Brown
Alexis Cairy
Julieta Garcia
Cassidy Hemp
Kamryn Holland
Ashton Nicewonger

Tenor

Patrick Bessenbacher
Jordan Hugh Sam
Brendan Lutes
Logan Moore
Daniel Parks
Paul Reynerson

Bass/Baritone

Aaron Harp
Michael Pizzini
Nicholas Renninger
Craig Robertson
Zachariah Smith
Nathan Ward

University Choir

Elizabeth Swanson, conductor

Emilie Bertram, conductor

Madeleine Vande Polder, collaborative pianist

Soprano

Piper Binkley
Ellie Caven
Leah Doogan
Shyanne Freeman
Madison Hershiser
Jessica Kim
Kendra McCone
Maya Owens
Nicky Weber
Sarah Zendel
Tyler Vinnola

Alto

Rita DiSilbio
Laura Dixon
Ivanna Evans
Mackenzie Faller
Katie Hagggett
Kason Hall
Anna Hansil
Batya King
Emily Majluf
Nicole Schneckenburger

Tenor

Joe Agger
Christian Atherton
Sam Bruckner
Chase Church
Michael Gaven
John Harless
Charlie Hunsucker
Chris Kerr
Isaiah Roybal
Evan Stark
Jonny Titelbaum
Jack Van Gilder

Bass/Baritone

Michael Batson
Matthew Dillon
Jack Gaffney
Mohammad Habib
Tyler Hansen
Elizabeth Healy
Caleb Izmirian
John Lettang
Mason Owens
Garret Schaaf
Sam Serra
Zachariah Smith
Zane Tsuchiya

Upcoming Performances

🎫 Ticketed events 📺 Live broadcast at cupresents.org

Monday, Nov. 12

Vocal Jazz and Madrigal Singers 📺

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Wednesday, Nov. 14

Symphonic Band 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, Nov. 15

Wind Symphony 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Friday, Nov. 16

Artist Series

Sarah Chang, violin

Julio Elizalde, piano 🎫

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Thursday, Nov. 29

Symphony Orchestra 📺

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

Friday, Nov. 30

Early Music Ensemble 📺

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Saturday, Dec. 1

African Highlife Ensemble 📺

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Sunday, Dec. 2

Japanese Ensemble 📺

2 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Gamelan Ensemble 📺

4:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Dec. 7-9

Holiday Festival 🎫

Macky Auditorium

Monday, Dec. 10

Concert Band and Campus Orchestra 📺

7:30 p.m., Grusin Music Hall

Monday, Dec. 17

Artist Series

Canadian Brass 🎫

7:30 p.m., Macky Auditorium

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