

Director's Greeting

Welcome and thank you again for joining us for "Visions of Peace"!

At the outset, our program this spring was intended to be a fresh take on an ageless topic – how music has flourished in spite of conflict, and through times of conflict, across centuries. But a close encounter with this theme becomes soulful very quickly, as we face our own desires for justice, our hopes to find beauty and respite in nature, our acceptance of suffering, our aspirations for a better future. We hope your experience with the music today will be as impacting and inspiring as the process of preparing it for you.

With all our best wishes for a wonderful spring,

Ellen Gilson Voth
Artistic Director

Program Notes/Texts and Translations

(Please withhold applause till the *** at the end of each section).

Felix Mendelssohn's affinity to the work and writings of Martin Luther both resonated with and highlighted many complicated dynamics in his esteemed family. Felix's grandfather, the German Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, produced a High German translation of (and commentary on) the Hebrew Pentateuch that was widely circulated in his day. Moses' son Abraham later converted to Christianity and the young Felix, following his baptism into the Protestant faith, remained a practicing Lutheran through much of his life. The text of Verleih' uns Frieden is Luther's translation of the Latin Da pacem Domine – a votive (psalmless) antiphon for peace.

Verleih uns Frieden

<i>Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich, Herr Gott, zu unsern Zeiten.</i>	Grant us peace graciously, Lord God, in our time.
<i>Est ist doch ja kein anderer nicht, Der für uns könnte streiten, denn Du, unser Gott, alleine.</i>	There is truly no other who can fight for us Than you, our God, alone.

I

Reading: excerpts from The Battle of Maldon (old English poem, referring to the Anglo-Saxon and Viking battle of AD 991. Translation by Douglas Killings.)

Of the forty-plus extant compositions entitled Missa L'homme armé - based on the French secular melody "The armed man" – the setting by the Burgundian composer Guillaume Dufay was one of, if not the, earliest. Dufay's masses, which expanded to four

voices from the three-part masses of his predecessors, laid the groundwork for the development of the mass in the late 15th century. At the end of the Kyrie, Dufay used the technique of diminution (casting a melody in shorter note values) to make the cantus firmus in the tenor line more recognizable.

<i>L'homme armé doibt on doubter.</i>	The armed man is to be feared.
<i>On a fait par tout crier,</i>	Everywhere it has been proclaimed
<i>Que chascun se viegne armer,</i>	That each man shall arm himself
<i>d'un haubregon de fer.</i>	With a coat of iron mail.
<i>L'homme armé doibt on doubter.</i>	The armed man is to be feared.

In a similar vein, the *Missa de la batalla escoutez* of Spanish composer Francisco Guerrero is based on a secular chanson – Clément Janequin’s dramatic *La Guerre*, which was written likely to celebrate the French victory at the Battle of Marignan (1515). Interestingly, this French chanson gained popularity on the Iberian Peninsula, as several Spanish composers of the Renaissance composed masses based on it.

<i>Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison. Kyrie eleison.</i>	Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.
<i>Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Laudamus te. Benedicimus te. Adoramus te. Glorificamus te. Gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. Domine Deus, Rex coelestis, Deus Pater omnipotens. Domine Fili unigenite, Jesu Christe. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris. Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis. Qui tollis peccata mundi, suscipe deprecationem nostram. Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis. Quoniam tu solus sanctus. Tu solus Dominus. Tu solus Altissimus, Jesu Christe. Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen.</i>	Glory be to God on high. And on earth peace, good will towards men. We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We worship Thee. We glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy. Thou only art the Lord. Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

II

Reading: Excerpts from “For the fallen” (Lawrence Binyon, 1869-1943)

Canadian physician and Lieutenant John McCrae was inspired to write “In Flanders Fields” in May of 1915, following the funeral of fellow soldier Alexis Helmer. As poppies were seen blooming above soldiers’ graves in the Flanders region of Europe, the “remembrance poppy” has since become an international symbol for commemorating lives lost in the First World War. Composer Paul Aitken depicts the image of wind across the fields with a subtle, undulating tenor line. Aitken currently serves as Artistic Director of the McCall Concert Singers and Director of Music / Worship Arts at Cathedral of the Rockies (McCall/Boise, Idaho).

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place, and in the sky,
The larks, still bravely singing, fly,
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the dead; short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe!
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high!
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

While known for his virtuosic concerti and grand symphonic writing, Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninov turned to composing an unaccompanied, reflective setting of the All-night Vigil in the winter of 1915, in the midst of deep political turmoil. His setting, not unlike Tchaikovsky’s setting of the Vigil thirty-plus years earlier, is infused with chant throughout its fifteen movements, paying homage to Orthodox tradition. Yet it is the combination of chant with the Romantic style of composition that have _____.

Transliteration of the Church Slavonic:

*Bogoróditse Djevo, raduisya, Blagodátnaya Marjiye, Gospód’s Tobóyu.
Blagoslovjena Ty vzhenáh, i blagosloven plod chrjeva Tvoyegó,
yako Spása rodjilá jesi dush nashih.*

Rejoice, O virgin mother of God, Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the saviour of our souls.

III (organ solo)

IV

Reading: The peace of wild things (Wendell Berry)

It was in the canton of Valais, Switzerland that German composer Paul Hindemith and German poet Rainer Maria Rilke both found refuge. Their routes to Switzerland were unique – Rilke via Italy, Hindemith via the United States (following his post at Yale University) - both being propelled by opposition to the war. It was in Switzerland that Rilke produced a large output of French poetry; Hindemith, years later, came into contact with it through a local Swiss musician, who asked Hindemith to compose settings for his chorus. Hindemith selected parts of a collection of fifty-nine French quatrains as the basis for his *Six Chansons*.

While key signatures are not given in the score, each chanson gravitates to a tonal center (A, E, G, A flat, E flat and G), and the relationships among those centers also appear as motives and harmonies throughout the work. They are masterful examples of French settings that give homage to German tradition in their part writing, form, and use of imitation.

La Biche

*O la biche; quel bel intérieur
d'anciennes forêts dans tes yeux abonde;
combien de confiance ronde
mêlée à combien de peur.
Tout cela, porté par la vive
gracilité de tes bonds.
Mais jamais rien n'arrive
à cette impassive
ignorance de ton front.*

Un Cygne

*Un cygne avance sur l'eau
tout entouré de lui-même
comme un glissant tableau;
ainsi à certains instants
un être que l'on aime
est tout un espace mouvant.
Il se rapproche doublé
comme ce cygne qui nage*

The Doe

O doe, what lovely ancient forest
depths abound in your eyes;
how much open trust
mixed with how much fear.
All this, borne by the brisk
gracility of your bounds.
But nothing ever disturbs
that unpossessive
unawareness of your brow.

A Swan

A swan advances over the water
all wrapped up in itself
like a gliding tableau.
Thus at certain moments
a being that one loves
seems just like a moving space.
He draws near, doubled
like that swan who swims

*sur notre âme troublée ...
qui à cet être ajoute
la tremblante image
de bonheur et de doute.*

Puisque tout passe

*Puisque tout passe, faisons
la mélodie passagère;
celle qui nous désaltère
aura de nous raison.
Chantons ce qui nous quitte
avec amour et art,
soyons plus vite
que le rapide départ.*

Printemps

*O mélodie de la sève
qui dans les instruments
de tous ces arbres s'élève,
accompagne le chant
de notre voix trop brève.
C'est pendant quelques mesures
seulement que nous suivons
les multiples figures
de ton long abandon,
ô abondante nature.
Quand il faudra nous taire
d'autres continueront ...
Mais à présent comment faire
pour te rendre mon
grand coeur complémentaire?*

En Hiver

*En hiver, la mort meurtrière
entre dans les maisons;
elle cherche la soeur, le père
et leur joue du violon.
Mais quand la terre remue,*

across our troubled soul,
who adds to this being
the trembling image
of happiness and of doubt.

Since everything passes

Since everything passes,
let us make fleeting melody;
the one that refreshes us
will get the better of us.
Let us sing that which is leaving us
with love and art;
let us be quicker
than its swift departure.

Spring

O melody of the sap
that rises in the instruments
of all these trees,
accompany the song
of our too-short voices.
It is only for a few measures
that we follow
the manifold figurations
of your long abandon,
O abundant nature.
When it comes time for us to fall silent
others will carry on ...
But for now what can I do
to make my whole heart
a complement to you?

In Winter

In Winter, murderous Death
comes into the houses,
seeks out sister and father
and plays to them on the fiddle.
But when the earth turns

*sous la bêche du printemps,
la mort court dans les rues
et salue les passants.*

Verger

*Jamais la terre n'est plus réelle
que dans tes branches, ô verger blond,
Ni plus flottante que dans la dentelle
que font les ombres sur le gazon.
Là se rencontre ce qui nous reste,
ce qui pèse et ce qui nourrit,
avec le passage manifeste
de la tendresse infinie.
Mais à ton centre la calme fontaine,
presque dormant en son ancien rond,
de ce contraste parle à peine,
tant en elle il se confond.*

under Springtime's spade
Death runs through the streets
and greets the passers-by.

Orchard

Never is the earth more solid than
in your branches, O fair orchard,
Nor more floating than in the lacework
the shadows make upon the grass.
There we meet what remains to us,
what has weight and nourishes us,
along with the manifest passing
of infinite tenderness.
But at your heart the calm fountain,
almost asleep in its ancient circle,
speaks hardly at all of these contrasts,
so much are they mixed up in it.

V

Reading: Words of Victor Frankl, Holocaust survivor and author of
Man's Search for Meaning

Bachuri Le'an Tisa provides a window into the extraordinary creativity that flourished in the midst of the unspeakable conditions of Theresienstadt, the small town north of Prague which served as a transit camp/ghetto for Jews during WWII. Composer Gideon Klein, who was interned at Terezin from 1941-1944, dedicated himself to fostering the cultural life at the camp, arranging music for choirs of prisoners. This setting for three-part women's choir (with lyrics given only for the first phrase in the original score) is believed to be either a folksong arrangement or an original composition by Klein (as his sister later claimed, when compiling a complete edition of his works).

Bachuri Le'an Tisa

Bachuri Le'an Tisa My boy, where are you going?
Chamudah kvar pasa. My sweetheart, it's all over.
La, la, la...

Michael Horvit, professor emeritus of the Moores School of Music at the University of Houston, composed "Even when God is silent" in 1988 for the 50th anniversary of

Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass). The text was discovered by Allied troops on the walls of a basement in Cologne, Germany. This performance (for men's choir) is followed by a setting of the Israeli folk melody Hashivenu, arranged for Novi Cantori by Hartford-based composer Joshua Hummel.

Even when God is silent

I believe in the sun even when it is not shining.
I believe in love even when feeling it not.
I believe in God even when God is silent.

Hashivenu

<i>Hashivenu Adonai Elecha</i>	Cause us to return, O Lord
<i>Venashuva</i>	And we shall return
<i>Chadesh yameinu kekedem.</i>	Renew our days of old

Reading: Words of Astronauts Loren Acton and Edgar Mitchell

In an interview for the Choral Journal (1987), Mechem described two important forces in his choral compositions: his attraction to simple texts and to singers expressing themselves “in direct language”, and also his attraction to imagery and poetic quality that “seems to invite music.” These criteria merged powerfully in “Island in Space”, which combines the awestruck impressions of Russell Schweickart, the first astronaut to make an unattached spacewalk (March, 1969), with a poem by Archibald MacLeish. A prayer for peace (“Dona nobis pacem”) is woven throughout. “Island in Space” was commissioned by California State University-Chico for its 1990 choral tour of the Soviet Union.

Dona nobis pacem. Grant us peace.

Up there you go around the earth every hour and a half, time after time after time. You look down; you can't imagine how many borders and boundaries you cross, and you don't even see them. The earth is a whole—so beautiful, so small, and so fragile. You realize that on that small spot is everything that means anything to you: all history, all poetry, all music, all art, death, birth, love, tears, all games, all joy—all on that small spot. And there's not a sound—only a silence the depth of which you've never known.
(Russell Schweickart)

to see the Earth
as it truly is
small and blue and beautiful
in that eternal silence
where it floats
is to see ourselves
as riders on the Earth together

brothers
on that bright loveliness
brothers who know now
they are truly brothers (Archibald Macleish)
Dona nobis pacem. Grant us peace.