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Women's Chorale Spring 2007 Program

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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Women's Chorale

Spring 2007 Program

Ye Sons of Israel, Op. 39, No. 2

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Ye sons of Israel, thank the Lord; Sing praises to His glorious name. Oh praise the Lord who liveth forever, Sing praise to Him now and for evermore. *Psalm 113:1, 2*

Nigra sum

Pablo Casals
(1876-1973)

Nigra sum, sed formosa
filiae Jerusalem:
Ideo dilexit me Rex,
et introduxit me
in cubiculum suum.
Et dixit mihi:
surge et veni amica mea,
jam hiems transiit,
imber abiit et recessit.
Flores apparuerunt in terra
nostra, tempus putationis
advenit. Alleluia!

I am very dark, but comely,
O daughters of Jerusalem:
Therefore the King loved
me, and brought me into
his chamber.
And said to me:
Arise, my love, and come:
for now the winter is past,
the rain is over and gone.
The flowers have appeared
in our land, the time of
pruning is come. Alleluia!

Song of Solomon 1:5, 4; 2:10

Songs for Women's Voices
6. I Will Be Earth

Gwyneth Walker
(b1947)

I will be earth, you be the flower,
You have found my root, you are the rain.
I will be boat, and you the rower.
You rock me and toss me, you are the sea.

How be steady earth that is now a flood.
The root is the oar afloat where has blown our bud.
We will be desert, pure salt the seed.
Burn radiant love, born scorpion need.

Mary Swenson

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She Weeps Over Ragoon

Eric Whitacre
(b1970)

Rain on Ragoon falls softly, softly falling ,
Where my dark lover lies.
Sad is his voice that calls me, sadly calling,
At grey moon rise.

Love, hear thou
How soft, how sad his voice is ever calling,
Ever unanswered and the dark rain falling,
Then as now.

Dark too our hearts, O love, shall lie and cold
As his sad heart has lain
Under the moongrey nettles, the black mould
And muttering rain.

James Joyce

Kyle Mustain, English horn

The Face of Love

Greg Gilpin
(b1964)

Who has seen the face of love?
It is the face of a child.
Its eyes are innocent and kind,
and they are blind to all but good.

Who has seen the face of love?
It is the face of a maiden.
It holds the blush of a first kiss
and dreams in bliss oh her beloved.

Who has seen the face of love?
It is the face of a mother,
tender as she sings a lullaby
to hush a cry and calm her child.

Who has seen the face of love?
It is the face of age.
It has seen love come to an end
and bloom again in winter snow.

Pamela Martin

Crossing the Bar

Gwyneth Walker

Sunset and evening star,
and one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
when I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
too full for sound and foam,
when that which drew from out the boundless deep
turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell
and after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
when I embark;

for tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
the flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
when I have crossed the bar.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

No Rocks A-Cryin'

Rollo Dilworth
(b1970)

Oh clap your hands, all you lands.
Shout unto God with cries of joy. Praise the Lord!
For the Lord is worthy, He's worthy of the praise.
Oh, I don't want the rocks cryin' out for me!

Praise to the Lord most high, He's the King.
He will protect us from our foes. Praise His name!
Praise Him for His mercy. I'll praise Him for His grace.
Oh, I don't want the rocks cryin' out for me!

Sing praises to God. Sing praises to our King.
No rocks a-cryin'! No rocks cryin' out for me.
Oh! I don't want the rocks cryin' out for me.

Rollo Dilworth

Notes

In 1840, Robert Schumann, the invariably perspicacious critic, said of Felix Mendelssohn, whom he greatly admired, that he is the Mozart of the nineteenth century, the most limpid of musicians, the one who clearly reveals the contradictions of his time and who is the first to reconcile them. Mendelssohn is best known today for his instrumental pieces while his many religious vocal works remain largely unknown, save for the oratorio Elijah. Mendelssohn's output of religious music is abundant, largely owing to his musical training with Friedrich Zelter, who made him familiar with the works of J. S. Bach and G. F. Handel, and his familiarity with the Bible. It was, perhaps, this latter factor—due to his Jewish ancestry and conversion to Protestantism—far more than any personal religious engagement that led him to compose so many sacred vocal pieces. *Ye Sons of Israel*, the second in a set of three pieces for female chorus written in 1830, is typical of Mendelssohn's sacred style: crystalline structural clarity within a rich but conservative harmonic context devoid of bombast and self-consciousness.

Legend has it that the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals was conceived when Brahms began his B-flat Major Quartet (of which Casals owned the original manuscript) and was born when Brahms completed it. This legend, confirmed and disseminated by Casals himself, is rendered moot by the fact that the quartet in question was completed and performed before Casals was even born. But even the ascertainable facts of his life make it a glorious tale. His father, the parish organist and choirmaster in Vendrell, Catalonia, gave Casals instruction in piano, violin, and organ. When Casals was 11, he first heard the cello performed by a group of traveling musicians and decided to study the instrument. His progress as a cellist was nothing short of prodigious, and he was able to give a solo recital in Barcelona at the age of 14. Although the lion's share of Casals's compositional output is instrumental, he did write a number of devotional vocal pieces that have made their way into the standard choral repertory, of which *Nigra sum* is one. Casals sets the sensual poetry from Song of Songs with lush harmonies and uncomplicated textures that evoke the richness of the woman in the text who extols the beauty of her own sun-darkened skin even though a light complexion was apparently prized.

Songs for Women's Voices by American composer Gwyneth Walker, from which *I Will Be Earth* comes, is a collection of musical settings of six poems by American poet May Swenson. The poems address a variety of topics—from feminism to God to romance to death—yet they speak with one voice, one style, and one life-affirming philosophy. Walker's settings present these poems in a simple and straightforward manner that portrays the beauty, humor, and passion of the words. *Crossing the Bar* creates images of the sea, with the "final voyage" leading us out across the water, to see our "Pilot, face to face."

Gwyneth Walker's musical setting expresses the growth from peaceful to ecstatic moods; the tolling of the bell, the meeting of the Pilot. Walker is a former composition faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory. She resigned in 1982 to pursue a career as a full-time composer and now lives on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont.

In the fall of 1992 Jocelyn Kaye Jensen approached composer Eric Whitacre about writing a piece for the new women's chorus at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, a position to which she had just been appointed. While looking for a text, Whitacre stumbled across James Joyce's *Poems Pennyeach*, a beautiful and melancholy collection of poetic microcosms written very early in his prolific career. As Whitacre worked on this piece, he found the northern Nevada winter in which he was composing to be particularly desolate; *She Weeps* was simply a natural extension of the barren surroundings and his subsequent mood. Whitacre wrote: "The piece seemed to write itself quickly and with few revisions, and its eventual warmth in the midst of such a bleak text kept me company through a cold and rainy January." Whitacre's setting of Joyce's poem is mystical and employs several colorful vocal techniques: sustained nasal consonants, whispering, and random muttering.

The Face of Love by Greg Gilpin was commissioned by the Women's Chorus of Dallas in 2000. The sentimentality of the text is echoed in Gilpin's music, which is stylistically akin to "pop" music. Gilpin is Director of Educational Choral Publications at Shawnee Press and a prolific composer and commercial musician.

Based on Psalm 47, *No Rocks A-Cryin'* by Rollo Dilworth is an original piece richly rooted in the contemporary African-American gospel tradition. The opening section presents unison lines and close parallel harmonies in heavily syncopated patterns. The middle section features a contrapuntal treatment of a single melodic line that is reminiscent of the opening unison theme of the piece. The contrapuntal section concludes with a statement in which the bass line presents the melodic theme in augmentation. The concluding chorus brings the piece to a dramatic close with bold, syncopated rhythms and harmonic and textual repetitions. Dilworth is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities and Music Education at the North Park University School of Music in Chicago, Illinois.

University Women's Chorale

Dr. Jeffrey Riehl, conductor

Dr. Mary Beth Bennett, accompanist

Sopranos

Rebecca Bruening

Kathleen Callahan

Kristin Coffee

Laura DiLibero

Katelin French

Carly Jones

Shannon McAlpine

Andrea Reitman

Sara Vogelsang

Jackie Wigder

Altos

Jane Berry

Shannon Birk

Sarah Dinces

Erin Murdoch

Ginger Nealon

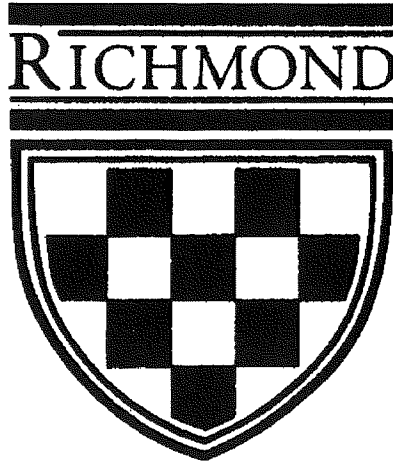
Melissa Pacheco

Kelly Roman

Becky Stewart

Camille Wingo

Jelena Zivanovic



Sunday, April 15, 2007
3:00 p.m.
Camp Concert Hall—Modlin Center for the Arts