

Sunday, 23 February 2025
2:30 p.m.

Biemesderfer Concert Hall
Winter Center of Visual and Performing Arts



presents

A Choral Spectrum: Variety, Spice, Life

I. Marauder Men

Black and Gold.....Traditional
Too Sweet.....Hozier, Arr. Nathan Heverin

II. Choral Union

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor • Jonathan Lefever, collaborative pianist

Lift Every Voice and Sing.....J. Rosamund Johnson (1874-1954)

Audience is invited to sing the **bolded** verses below.

**Lift every voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies;
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun, let us march on, till victory is won.**

*Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet, with a steady beat, have not our weary feet come to the place for which our parents sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.*

Tierra Abrams, soloist

**God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,
Thou who hast brought us thus far on our way;
Thou who hast by thy might led us into the light;
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
Shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.**

III. Cantilena

“Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains” from *Elijah*.....Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

*Lift thine eyes, O lift thine eyes to the mountains, whence cometh my help.
Thy help cometh from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.
He hath said, thy foot shall not be moved. Thy keeper will never slumber.*

“Adiemus” from *Songs of Sanctuary*Karl Jenkins (b. 1944)

Emily Shank, piccolo
Madelyne Prazak & Devin Sparwasser, soloists

How Can I Keep from Singing?.....American Folk Song,
Arr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

*My life flows on in endless song above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real though distant song that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?
What though the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth, it's living!
What though the darkness round me close, songs in the night it's giving!
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since I believe that love abides, how can I keep from singing?
When tyrants tremble when they hear the bells of freedom ringing.
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell, in dungeon dark, our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends hold courage in their heart, how can I keep from singing?*

IV. Chorale

“Zoriu byut (Reveille)” from *A Pushkin Wreath*Georgy Sviridov (1915-1998)

*They're sounding reveille...from my hands the ancient Dante falls,
On my lips a nascent verse, half-read, falls silent, the spirit soars into the distance.
Ah, familiar sound, lively sound! How often you sounded there,
Where I quietly grew up in days long past. They're sounding reveille....*

Margaret Keeley, soprano • Shane Geisel, baritone • Julia Lambert, alto

“Fengyang Song” from *A Set of Chinese Folk Songs*.....Anhui Folk Song (Han),
Arr. Chen Yi (b. 1953)

*Gongs and drums are in my hands, I am singing a song while playing drums and gongs.
Other songs I don't know how to sing, I can only sing a Fengyang song.*

Mata del Anima Sola (Tree of the Lonely Soul).....Antonio Estévez (1916-1988)

*Tree of the lonely soul, wide opening of the riverside—
Now you will be able to say: Here slept Cantaclaro.
With the whistle and the sting of the twisting wind,
The dappled and violet dusk quietly entered the corral.
The night, tired mare, shakes her mane and black tail above the riverside;
And, its silence, your ghostly heart is filled with awe.*

Cesar Rangel Muñoz, soloist

Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair.....Appalachian Folk Song,
Arr. Stuart Churchill (1907-2000)

V. University Choir

Verleih' uns Frieden.....Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

*In these our days so perilous,
Lord, peace in mercy send us;
No God but thee can fight for us,
No God but thee defend us;
Thou our only God and Savior.*

From *Three Japanese Folk Songs*.....Traditional,
Arr. Misuzu McManus (b. 1958)

2. Takeda no Komoriuta (Lullaby of Takeda)

Note: *Bon Festival* is The Festival of Souls, held around mid-August.
People who have moved to different places to work return to their hometowns during this period.

*It comes tough season after Bon festival for babysitters,
Because it starts snowing and the baby is peevish.
I'm not so happy though Bon festival comes,
Because I have neither katabira nor obi.
This baby cries so much and embarrasses a babysitter (me).
A babysitter is afraid to be scolded by employer and feels drained all day long.
I wait anxiously to leave here and go back to my parent's house of which I dream.*

3. Zui Zui Zukkorobashi

Note: words in plain text cannot be translated)

*Zui zui zukkorobashi sesame, paste zui.
Kids are being chased by a tea jar toppinsyan,
If it passes by, let's play loud.
A mouse (mice) around the bales of rice
Eats the rice and squeaks choo, choo, choo, choo.
Even if father calls you or mother calls you, do not leave here.
Who chipped off the tea bowl around a well?*

Danny Boy.....*Londonderry Air*,
Arr., Joseph Flummerfelt (1937-2019)

VI. Choral Union

Elijah Rock.....Traditional Spiritual,
Arr. Jester Hairston (1901-2000)

Selected Program Notes

Lift Every Voice and Sing was first performed in 1900 as a song for a celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday by a choir of 500 schoolchildren in Jacksonville, Florida. It is often referred to as the "Black

National Anthem" for its powerful celebration of freedom, hope, and resilience. The song's lyrics, written by James Weldon Johnson, reflect the struggles and triumphs of the African American community, calling for unity and perseverance in the face of adversity. The uplifting music by **John Rosamond Johnson** complements the message of strength and resolve, making the anthem an enduring symbol of African American pride and patriotism.

Lift Thine Eyes to the Mountains, from the oratorio *Elijah*, was composed in 1846 and is one of the most beautiful and well-known choral works by **Felix Mendelssohn**. The oratorio tells the story of the prophet Elijah, focusing on his life, struggles, and triumphs, while addressing themes of faith, divine intervention, and perseverance in the face of adversity. Another piece by Mendelssohn, performed by University Choir, *Verleih' uns Frieden*, was composed in 1831 and clearly reflects the inspiration of Johann Sebastian Bach. A straightforward chorale melody is introduced by low voices, which is then sung by the high voices and paired with a countermelody in the low voices. The piece concludes with a stunning 4-part chorale-style harmonization. Mendelssohn is credited for inspiring the Bach Revival in the 19th century, which introduced significant Baroque Period repertoire to modern audiences.

Adiemus is the first movement of *Songs of Sanctuary* by composer **Kenneth Jenkins**. He writes that he conceived the piece "in the European classical tradition, but it was my intention that the vocal sound should be more akin to those heard in ethnic or world music. The 'words' are invented; in this respect the work is a vocalise, albeit one in which the vowels and consonants are specified."

Georgy Sviridov's stature as a composer is evidenced by his tremendous popularity among Russian musicians, musicologists, and audiences. His music has entered the standard repertoire of Russia's professional musicians; it has become the subject of research and analytical works by the country's leading musicologists. Most impressive is his popularity among Russian audiences; Sviridov is a household name, loved and revered by the occasional concertgoer as well as the connoisseur. Outside of Russia, Sviridov's works have been sporadically performed, primarily by Russian artists. *Zoriu byut (Reveille)* was composed in 1978 and is the seventh movement of a choral concerto which sets to music various poems by Alexander Pushkin. This poem, written in 1829, reflects on the sounds of dawn bells and their evocative power. It continues to explore themes of nostalgia and the passage of time. The mood can be described as solemn, pensive, calm, slow, and mystical reflecting the contemplative nature of the text, requiring performers to convey a sense of introspection and reverence. The use of a seven-voice choir allows for rich harmonic textures, while the solo parts provide opportunities for expressive interpretation.

Chen Yi's arrangement of *Fengyang Song* reflects her personal life experiences: "When I studied composition in the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, I learned to sing hundreds of Chinese folk songs, collected from more than twenty provinces and fifty ethnic groups; I went to the countryside to collect original folk music every year. I realized that these folk songs reflect the people's thoughts, sentiments, local customs, and manners. They are like a mirror of their daily lives. They are sung in regional dialects, using the idioms of everyday speech with their particular intonations, accents, and cadences. This correlation between speech and music distinguishes folk songs of one region from another. I learned all the songs by heart and sang them back in the exams every week. They melted into my blood and became my natural music language. The deeper I walk into musical life, the more I treasure this rich culture from my homeland." A note of special thanks here to Jinge Ma, a soprano in Chorale, who volunteered time and effort to teach us authentic Chinese diction!

Mata del Anima Sola, by Venezuelan composer **Antonio Estévez**, is renowned for its vivid portrayal of the Venezuelan plains, known as the *llanos*, and the solitary figure of the *llanero*, or "man of the plains." The composition requires a soloist to embody the *llanero*, whose songs are often improvised. The choir's role as an instrumental ensemble adds a unique texture to the sound, demanding precise rhythmic execution and expressive vocalization to convey the vivid imagery of the Venezuelan plains.

Three Japanese Folk Songs by **Misuzu McManus** is a contemporary art song cycle that draws inspiration from traditional Japanese poetry and musical aesthetics, blending Western classical techniques with a deep reverence for Japanese cultural themes. McManus, known for her ability to merge different musical traditions, brings a fresh and evocative interpretation to these songs, offering listeners an intimate journey through the nuanced expressions of nature, love, and reflection that are

central to Japanese poetry. Drawing from the themes of the natural world, emotions, and the delicate balance between joy and sorrow, McManus uses her musical craft to convey a profound sense of longing and transcendence. While each song is distinct in its own expression, together they reflect a deep connection between the individual and the environment, a hallmark of Japanese poetic traditions. The music's often subtle, flowing textures echo the simplicity and elegance of the poetry, capturing both its quiet moments of introspection and its vibrant energy.

To enjoy highlights of previous choral concerts at the Tell School of Music, explore:
Jeffrey Gemmell's Repository of Artful Things (gemmell-posts.com)



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PERFORMING PERSONNEL

MARAUDER MEN

First Tenor

Bryce Logan
Ray Lucera
Tanner Wright
Roberto Santana

Second Tenor

Matthew Deeken
Adrian Medina
Sam Messersmith
Nicholas Stueckroth
Nick Carter
Landen Hibshman

Baritone

Owen McMahon
Samuel Pedersen
Dakota Shertzer
Edrien Dingzon
Tymere Glenn-Peters

Nathan Heverin, music director

Bass

Max Guthrie
Nathan Heverin
Lucas Sinkinson
Enrique Angeles

CANTILENA CHOIR

Tierra Abrams
Toni Abson
Eva Anderson
Lyn Bingaman
Kathryn Cieri
Monica Cunningham
Lydia Eifert

Veronica Fox
Abigail Fraver
Rose Leitner
Alyssa Matos
Madalyn Miller
Katelyn Mongiovi
Madelyne Prazak

Taya Puffenberger
Charlie Reise
Jessica Rodier
Sarah Rothermel
Catherine Samer
Katherine Sarro
Bryn Smeltzer

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

Bozhena Sobkevych
Devin Sparwasser
Elsa Thomas
Cassandra Wright
Morgan Wells

CHORALE

Soprano

Paige Hastings
Margaret Keeley
Katarina Lingo
Jinge Ma
Alayna Morales
Katherine Thorpe
Cassandra Wright

Alto

Eva Anderson
Leah Halcisak
Julia Lambert
Madalyn Miller
Rachelle Miller-
Washington
Annie Sahd

Tenor

Matthew Cortes
Shane Geisel
Grayson Conrad
Bryce Logan
Christian Rodriguez
Roberto Santana
Tanner Wright

Bass

Matthew Cona
Jovanne Cortez
Michael Orth
Samuel Pedersen
Ezekiel MacCloskey
Cesar Rangel Muñoz
Dakota Shertzer
Evan Zimmerman

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor

UNIVERSITY CHOIR

Soprano

Eva Anderson
Margaret Fogleman
Alec Gartner
Renaë Greak
Cassidy McNew
Makenzie Merkel
Madison Miller
Alexis Phillips
Catherine Repkoe
Sarah Rothermel
Molly Schaeffer
Noah Schenke
Nikki Sobkevych
Devin Sparwasser
Sarah Stevens
Elsa Thomas
Elizabeth Wicht

Alto

Kristen Ajala
Alexandra Bube
Ava Callahan
Brianna Cook
Rebekah de Jesus
Kathryn Felix
Abigail Giughlo
Leah Halcisak
Talia Hall
Chrono Holly
Alyssa Lee
Erin McCarty
Rachelle Miller-
Washington
Aixa Preston
Kellee Roberts
Caitlynn Shaefer
Emily Shank
Naomi Sharpless
Maidson Sweeney
Lapis Valido

Tenor

Jayvion Allison
Blake Atkins
Rye Boland
Grayson Conrad
Matthew Cortes
Peter Coulbourne
Hayden David
Victoria Dorsch
Shane Geisel
Nathan Heverin
Cohen Harrison
Kevin Lynch
Adrian Medina
Samuel Messersmith
Christian Rodriguez
Roberto Santana
Olivia Shaheen
Brandon Shilling

Bass

Enrique Angeles
Jackson Baker
Jude Bennett-Johnson
Nick Carson
Ethan Causa
Josh Corcoran
Elijah Corn
Angus Corpus
Damion Crawford
Ethan Desjardins
Edrien Dingzon
Milon Eaton
Dylan Gehringer
Lucas Grant
Max Guthrie
Ryan Hahn
Robert Harden
Austin Kelly
Josiah Kerr
Michael Krem
Cameron Malone
Caleb Marcott
Samuel Pedersen
Dakota Shertzer
Lucas Sinkinson
Jordan Smith
Tim Youse
Evan Zimmerman

Dr. Jeffrey S. Gemmell, conductor