

PALOUSE CHORAL SOCIETY

Matthew Myers
Artistic Director

Alisa Toy
Assistant Director

Elena Panchenko
Pianist

present



Notes, Texts and Translations

Chorale

Earth, Teach Me Rupert Lang (b. 1948)

Courtney Swanson, Connor Hall, solos

Ally Fraser, Tyler Barton, duet

Rupert Lang was born in Red Deer, Alberta. He had an early passion for visual arts but decided to study music at the University of Manitoba. He continued his studies with a master's degree at St. John's College at the University of Cambridge. He served as organist and music director at Christ Church Cathedral in Vancouver, BC, from 1986 to 2024. He is founder and artistic director of the Vancouver Children's Choir. He composed "Earth Teach Me," using a text from the Ute Nation. The piece's reflective qualities are amplified by the composer's choice to insert a full measure of rest between each stanza of text. The silence offers time for consideration of each quality we can learn from the earth.

Earth teach me stillness
as the grasses are stilled with light.
Earth teach me suffering
as old stones suffer with memory.
Earth teach me humility
as blossoms are humble with beginning.
Earth teach me caring
as the mother who secures her young.
Earth teach me courage
as the tree stands alone.
Earth teach me limitation
as the ant crawls on the ground.

Earth teach me freedom
as the eagle which soars through the air.
Earth teach me resignation
as the leaves that die in the fall.
Earth teach me regeneration
as the seed rises in the spring!
Earth teach me to forget myself
as melted snow forgets its life.
Earth teach me to remember kindness
as dry fields weep with rain.
Earth teach me.

Tikkun Olam..... Crystal Birdsong

Dr. Crystal Birdsong was born in Shreveport, Louisiana, where she earned her bachelor's degree in music at Centenary College. She went on to earn an M.M. and Ph.D. in music composition from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where she now teaches choir and piano at Liberty Magnet High School. Her composition "Tikkun Olam," composed for the LSU Chamber Singers, explores the concept of "repairing the world" from Judaism. The mission of "tikkun olam" is to build a better world through care for the land, social justice, compassion, and a rejection of the noise of modern society. This message of peace draws poignant reflection toward the world's humanitarian crises, particularly in the Middle East.

Sung in Hebrew:

Tikkun olam.
Hashem y' varekh otanu.
Boreha' olam.
Ha'shamayim shayakhiym l'bore
Akh et ha'aretz hu natan
Le ye la dav shel ha'adam.

English Translation:

Repair the world.
May we be blessed by the Lord,
The maker of heaven and earth.
The heavens are the Lord's heavens,
but the earth he has given
to the children of man.

Peace of Wild Things..... Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

Alisa Toy, conductor

Jake Runestad is a native of Rockford, Illinois. He earned a bachelor's degree in music education from Winona State University in 2009, and then earned a master's degree in composition from Peabody Conservatory in 2011. He quickly became a rising star in choral music and has had works performed across the world. His work "The Peace of Wild Things" features poetry by Wendell Berry, an American novelist and environmental conservationist. The piece begins with melancholy colors, showing concern about everyday life and the difficulties therein. The emotion shifts about halfway through to show the hope that can come from experiencing nature, and it ends triumphantly in increasingly bright and warm colors which reflect the freedom found in the wilderness.

When despair for the world grows in me
and I wake in the night
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,
I go and lie down where the wood drake
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.
I come into the peace of wild things
who do not tax their lives with forethought
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.
And I feel above me the day-blind stars
waiting with their light. For a time
I rest in the grace of the world and am free.



A plaina corre ligeiraarr. Tiago Marques (b. 1972)

Tiago Marques is a choral conductor and educator based in Lisbon, Portugal, where he earned a bachelor's degree in composition at the Escola Superior de Música de Lisboa. He went on to earn a master's degree in choral conducting at the Utrechts Conservatorium in the Netherlands. He teaches choir at his alma mater, the Escola Artística de Música do Conservatório Nacional. Marques writes the following about "A plaina corre ligeira":

"The melody and lyrics are traditional, and there are folk songs with a similar melody in other countries in Europe. When I performed it some years ago in a retirement community in Germany, some folks there even sang the last two lines with us. The nonsensical words "charia", "crissa" and "pinga" are supposedly onomatopoeic to the actions described (to my own ears, that is accurate only for the last verse)."

Sung in Portuguese:

A plaina corre ligeira,
tornando lisa a madeira.
No viçoso bosque em flor
sentese o mesmo rumor.

Na forja se molda o aço,
com arte, amor e cansaço.
Na bigorna do ferreiro
bate o martelo certo.

O rochedo, antes da aurora,
aos golpes do picão chora.
O artista, com suor,
lhe dará forma melhor.

English Translation:

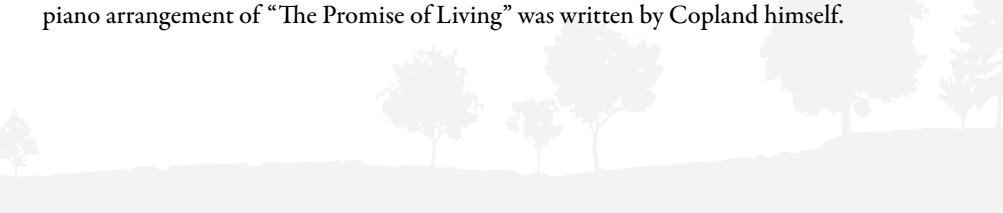
The plane runs swiftly,
making the wood smooth.
In the lush, flowering woods
the same murmur can be felt.

At the forge, the steel is moulded
with art, love and weariness.
On the smith's anvil
the accurate hammer strikes.

The boulder, before dawn,
cries at the pickaxe's strikes.
The artist, with sweat [with his hard work]
will give it a better shape.

"The Promise of Living" from *The Tender Land*Aaron Copland (1900-90)
Elena Panchenko, Deborah Collins, four-hand piano

Aaron Copland, best known for the rousing Americana style of his ballet scores like *Appalachian Spring* and *Rodeo*, brought his folksy style to the opera stage for his only full-length opera, 1954's *The Tender Land*. The opera's libretto was written by Horace Everett (a pseudonym for Erik Johns, Copland's love interest. The opera's themes focus on the meaning that toiling on something can bring to people's lives and the joy of yielding a fruitful harvest. The setting in the Midwest heartland during the Depression Era makes the hopeful tone feel touching. Copland originally wrote the opera for it to be premiered on national television, but NBC did not move forward with the production, and it instead had its premiere at the New York City Opera. "The Promise of Living" is the finale of the first of the opera's three acts. Copland incorporates the melody of the hymn "Zion's Walls" as a countermelody to the primary theme of the piece; Copland had included this tune in his second set of Old American Songs for voice and piano only two years before the opera's premiere. Though many of Copland's choral works are settings of his art songs arranged by his students, the four-hand piano arrangement of "The Promise of Living" was written by Copland himself.



The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving
Is born of our loving our friends and our labor.

The promise of growing with faith and with knowing
Is born of our sharing our love with our neighbor.

The promise of loving, the promise of growing
Is born of our singing in joy and thanksgiving.

For many a year we've known these fields
And know all the work that makes them yield.
Are you ready to lend a hand?
We're ready to work, we're ready to lend a hand.
By working together we'll bring in the blessings of harvest.

We plant each row with seeds of grain,
And Providence sends us the sun and the rain.
By lending a hand, by lending an arm
Bring out from the farm the blessings of harvest.

Give thanks there was sunshine, give thanks there was rain,
Give thanks we have hands to deliver the grain.
O let us be joyful, O let us be grateful,
Come join us in thanking the Lord for his blessing.

The promise of ending in right understanding
is peace in our own hearts and peace with our
neighbor.

O let us sing our song and let our song be heard.
Let's sing our song with our hearts and find a
promise in that song.

The promise of living, the promise of growing
The promise of ending is labor and sharing and
loving.

Chamber Choir

Color All Maps New Dylan Trần (b. 1994)

This eight-movement work will be performed without pause. Please hold your applause until the end of the final movement.

Dylan Trần is a Louisiana-born composer who currently resides in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. He studied music at Loyola University in New Orleans and has pursued a career in conducting, vocal performance, and composition. His multimovement piece *Color All Maps New* is his longest choral composition, written in 2024. The poetry comes from the book *Color All Maps New* (2021) by Jack Bedell, former poet laureate of the State of Louisiana and Professor of English at Southeast Louisiana State University in Hammond. Trần's program notes are below:

Looking at satellite images of Louisiana's coast today, you'll notice it's vastly different than how it appears on the classic U.S. map. In just the last century, Louisiana has lost over 4,833 square kilometers of land to coastal erosion, exposing the region to increased risks of hurricanes, floods, and storm surges. To put these numbers into perspective, this equates to long-term average loss rates of approximately an American football field's worth of coastal wetlands within 34 minutes when losses are rapid to within 100 minutes at more recent, slower rates. As wetlands disappear, more people are forced to relocate, putting additional strain on local communities and impacting the coastal fishing industry. Though the state has developed an ambitious plan for coastal restoration and initiated projects like freshwater diversions, it is unlikely that all depleted wetlands can be rehabilitated.

Color All Maps New tells the story of a family in south Louisiana and their experience of coastal erosion. The parents recall places they once played as children, now lost to the waters, and mourn the chance to share those memories with their own children. The children grow up to face their own difficult choice: whether or not to leave the only home they've known in light of the increasing danger. One movement reflects on a Native American reservation now submerged beneath the tide—a powerful reminder of heritage and loss.

Though the subject matter is heavy, the piece also carries a ray of hope. The "moral" of the work is that by investing in our own communities and those immediately surrounding them, we can foster real, lasting change for the whole planet. In that spirit, a portion of all royalties from *Color All Maps New* will be donated to coastal restoration funds and Indigenous tribes in coastal Louisiana, in perpetuity.

I. Nuage

All along the coast,
reeds are laid down by wind:
the sky one long cloud,
grey to the horizon,
soft breeze and shallow surf,
low land my children will never see,

each tide a quiet goodbye,
pelicans refuse to leave their nests,
closer together each season,
their sand washing out to gulf.
Soon enough storms will brew offshore.
Water will color all maps new.

II. Mesayer

Janice Willard, Heather Nelson, Madi Fleek, trio
Allie Tir, solo

The horizon releases just enough light
to wake the surface of the lake
and climb into the very top
of the single cypress tree in frame
so that its leaves and branches
look newborn against starry sky.
I know this photograph is of a real place,
a swamp not too far from home,
but its stinginess of light

raises the devil of metaphor
I can't chase away with knowledge
that its dark is just dark, and its big sky
is only sky. I tell myself
this tree is alone on the water,
not loneliness; this light is fading
but is not loss. These leaves
are green because they are leaves.
No need to say more than that.

III. Space, Release

I am teaching my son to throw into space,
He sees motion and color,
releases the ball toward what's no longer there.
Always behind his target
no matter how soon he releases the throw.
His feet pat grass in rhythm
motion and delivery good, all good,
his eyes though won't drift beyond now.

Strange to know how much the future presses on his heart,
fourteen years old and so looking forward
to drinking or girls or driving,
so ready to haul off toward the open arms
the horizon extends just out of view.
And yet, how miserable, how hard it is
to help him accept the notion of early.

IV. Gulf, Waves

Big moon, breeze,
My daughter hurries to finish
her sentence in the sand
before waves climb up the shore,
like dogs sniffing panéed meat
She wants to spell out the names
of all the people she loves,

but the closer the water gets,
the more she knows
she'll have to edit her list
on the fly, leave some names
behind in the air to beat the tide,
its hunger boundless, and time.

V. Lines for Lake DeCade

Down the warped dock,
boards frayed and leaning
toward the surface of this lake,
water going brown, then to froth,
sand flies, mosquito hawks,

trawling motors, hum in the gray light
of tired days and heavy nets.
Lord of fin and wing and prayer,
hold me here as long as you can,
before the water shifts, brings its salt in.

VI. Isle de Jean Charles

Forget about the taut line stretched
between forefinger and cast net.
Forget about the densities of family and of time,
binding old ones to babies just learning to walk.
Forget about the days spent working together
after countless storms,
salvaging the whole island's memories,
spreading the out to dry in the sun.
When the water finally takes

the last ten percent of this island,
think only of Island Road,
how the road once offered the one way
to school or town or places past the horizon.
Soon enough, there will be no way back along this road.
Anyone who drives around the barricade
of the mainland will find waves at the end of blacktop,
will find gulls floating over the ghosts of rooftops,
wind where there once was song.

VII. New Growth Moon

Kobe Hagen, solo

If I could, I'd leave lowland and pine forests behind,
move away from rivers that ache for my backyard,
merciless Old Testament rains.
Lord, how would it feel at the base of a mountain range,
calm lake in the distance, night breeze whispering
without the smell of storm?
Let me hole up on a porch, wood creaking under me like a raft.
The moon aglow over settling fog, could turn treetops into waves.

VIII. Just a Beginning

What a slow breath let out from the porch
as the sun rises over pine trees,
my wife teaching our daughter to brown roux
without burning flour.

Chorale

Famine Song VIDA

Mac Murphy, solo

arr. Matthew Culloton (b. 1976)

Mackenzie Jacobs, Sadie Lenssen, duet

VIDA was a vocal quartet founded in 1995 in Bloomington, Indiana by Moira Smiley, Sarah Ferrell, Stephanie Heidemann, and Jessica Pease. After seven years of arranging folk music and writing original works together, VIDA disbanded. Moira Smiley went on to find great success in composition with famous works such as “Bring Me Little Water, Silvy” and “Refugee,” which she has performed with her ensemble VOCO. “Famine Song” has been arranged for SATB voices by Matthew Culloton, a Minneapolis-based composer and conductor of the professional choir The Singers. Notes from Culloton are below:

“Inspired by stories of Sudanese basket weavers, this song expresses the pain and hope experienced by those in the famine of the 1980s. In the midst of hardship, a wonderful new sense of creativity emerged when women began weaving baskets as a means of survival. Central to the song is a section of improvisation over shifting chords. VIDA saw the two voices as the voices of women from other cultures raised in empathy.

Ease my spirit, ease my soul,
please free my hands from this barren soil.
Ease my mother, ease my child,
earth and sky be reconciled.

Out of heat, under sun,
comes the hunger to everyone.
Famine's teeth, famine's claw
on the sands of Africa.

Rain, rain, rain.
Rain, rain, rain.
Weave, my mother, weave, my child.
Weave your baskets of rushes wild.

Wanderlied Hugo Distler (1908-42)

Hugo Distler was a prolific choral composer in the early twentieth century in Germany. He attended the Leipzig Conservatory to study conducting and piano but changed his focus to composition and organ. After his graduation, he became organist at St. Jacobi in Lübeck, where he was forced to join the Nazi party to maintain church employment. He left this position shortly thereafter and worked at the Lübeck Conservatory for four years before

moving to Stuttgart and finally to Berlin, where he taught and conducted at the Hochschule für Musik. He fell into a deep depression due to the deaths of his friends, restrictions on what he was allowed to teach, and concerns of being drafted to the German Army. He ultimately took his own life at age 34 as he felt that he could not continue to try to serve God in the midst of the Nazi regime. His music harkens back to earlier styles of German music, often including polyphony and lighter textures; his “Wanderlied” features only three vocal parts. His compositions were considered “degenerate art” by the Nazi party, but they have endured the test of time and are now some of the most popular works from Germany during his lifetime. His setting of Eduard Mörike’s poem “Wanderlied” (“Hiking Song”) is a light and joyful exploration of the outdoors. The “fa la la” refrains reflect the delight at escaping the difficulties of the urban (and political) landscape and experiencing the simplicity of nature.

Sung in German:

Entflohn sind wir der Stadt Gedränge,
Wie anders leuchtet hier der Tag!
Wie klingt in unsre Lustgesänge lorchensang.
Lorchensang hier and Wachtelschlag!

Nun wandern wir and lassen gerne
Herrn Griesgram zu Haus;
Ein frischer Blick dringt in die Ferne
Nur immer hinaus!
Wir wandern, bis der späte Abend taut,
Wir rasten, bis der Morgen wieder graut.

Man lagert sich am Schattenquelle,
Wo erst das muntre Reh geruht;
Aus hohler Hand trinkt sich der helle, kühle Trank, der
helle Trank wohl noch eins so gut.

Nun wandern wir and lassen gerne
Herrn Griesgram zu Haus;
Ein frischer Blick dringt in die Ferne
Nur immer hinaus!
Wir wandern, bis der späte Abend taut,
Wir rasten, bis der Morgen wieder graut.

English Translation:

We are an escape from the city’s hustle,
How different is the daylight here!
How does the lark song sound in our singing?
The lark sings and the quail puffs here!

As we wander we like to leave
Herr Griesgram* at home; (*a grouch, a grumpy person)
A fresh look comes from looking into the distance
Now, always out and about!
We walk until late evening melts away,
We rest until the morning dawns again.

We camp down in the shadowy place,
Where only the merry deer has rested;
From a hollow hand drinks a refreshing cool drink,
The cool drink is ever so good.

As we wander we like to leave
Herr Griesgram* at home; (*a grouch, a grumpy person)
A fresh look comes from looking into the distance
Now, always out and about!
We walk until late evening melts away,
We rest until the morning dawns again.

Someplace.....Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

Lauren Clement, Brian Collins, duet

Gus Labayen, vocal percussion

North Dakota-born composer **Jocelyn Hagen** is known for her innovative and rhythmic choral compositions. She studied music education, theory, and composition at St. Olaf College and went on to earn a master’s degree in composition at the University of Minnesota. She and her husband, Timothy Takach, have been active composers in the Twin Cities area since their wedding in 2006, the same year that they founded Graphite Publishing, a pioneering organization in the distribution of choral music via digital download rather than paper scores. “Someplace” features poetry by singer/songwriter Chris Koza. Hagen strove to keep a contemporary style befitting the author’s text, so she fused elements of choral music, pop a cappella, and acoustic guitar music in her piece. The incorporation of vocal percussion allows the piece to shift between different time signatures mellifluously, depicting uniquely different places the narrator may choose to visit.

Let's go Someplace
To the wind be wed
Let the compass spin
And by chance be led
Across a sea
Of rocks and red
Of mountain peaks
And riverbeds
Let's drift like clouds
Ever changing form
Through the sapphire day
And amethyst eve
Through ruby dawn
And emerald morn
Where the moon dies
And sun's reborn
Let's sing like branches
Bending with the breeze
In the summer heat
Through the autumn leaves

With winter's hush
As the rivers freeze
mimic trickling cricks
In Spring's reprise
Let's go someplace
Where the boundaries blur
Lost in Prairie Sage
Among Bison herds
Where pheasants fly
Where the river turns
Let's be together
On this sweet sojourn
Let's go someplace
Let's go someplace
Let's go

**"Make Our Garden Grow" from *Candide*Leonard Bernstein (1918-90)
arr. Robert Page (1927-2016)**

Leonard Bernstein was one of the most famous conductors and composers in the United States in the 20th century. He was the first American conductor to be considered among the greats internationally. He composed a wide variety of music, from musicals like *West Side Story* and *On the Town* to film scores like *On the Waterfront* to large-scale choral-orchestral pieces like *Chichester Psalms* and *MASS: A Theatre Piece for Singers, Players, and Dancers*. He is known for his sweeping orchestrations and syncopated, percussive rhythms. His 1956 operetta *Candide* was based on Voltaire's novella from 1759. Throughout the work, the main characters try to understand the meaning of life and explore multiple philosophies as they seek wealth and prosperity. Their attempts continue to fail them. In the finale, "Make Our Garden Grow," they resolve to move to the bucolic countryside and pursue a simpler life together, finding joy in creating their own space together. The piece was arranged for choir by Robert Page, a major American conductor who had a storied career leading the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh, teaching at Carnegie Mellon University, and conducting choruses with the Cleveland Orchestra.

You've been a fool and so have I,
but let's be man and 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!

I thought the world was sugarcake,
for so our master said.
But now I'll teach my hands to bake
our loaf of daily bread.

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