



PROGRAM NOTES *for our* VIRTUAL CONCERT – SPRING 2020

MASTERS OF THE BAROQUE - Fall 2013

1. Air (from *Orchestral Suite No. 3 in D Major*) **Johann Sebastian Bach**
Orchestral Suite No. 3 contains one of Bach's most famous and sublime pieces—the Air, with its walking bass line, long, lamenting melody, and haunting inner voice dissonances. The orchestra will play it through once and then will be joined by the Chorale humming the instrumental parts.

2. Cum Sancto Spiritu (from *Gloria*) **Antonio Vivaldi**
Gloria is a setting of the hymn of praise from the traditional Latin Mass. The work is divided into twelve separate movements, the final movement a setting of the words *Cum Sancto Spiritu, in gloria Dei Patris. Amen*. Translation: With the Holy Spirit, the glory of God the Father. Amen. This exuberant conclusion is a fugue which Vivaldi adapted from the final section of a *Gloria* composed in 1708 by Giovanni Maria Ruggeri. Vivaldi expanded Ruggeri's work into a joyous finale in praise of the Holy Spirit.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK - Spring 2014

3. One (from *A Chorus Line*) **Marvin Hamlisch**
Set on the bare stage of a Broadway theater, the musical is centered around seventeen Broadway dancers auditioning for spots on a chorus line. *A Chorus Line* provides a glimpse into the personalities of the performers and the choreographer, as they describe the events that have shaped their lives and their decisions to become dancers. *A Chorus Line* opened at the Shubert Theatre on Broadway July 25, 1975. An unprecedented box office and critical hit, the musical received twelve Tony Award nominations and won nine, in addition to the 1976 Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

The original Broadway production ran for 6,137 performances, becoming the longest-running production in Broadway history until surpassed by *Cats* in 1997, and the longest-running Broadway musical originally produced in the US, until surpassed in 2011 by the revival of *Chicago*. It remains the seventh longest-running Broadway show ever.

THE CLASSICAL ROMANTICS - Fall 2014

4. Verleih uns Frieden

Felix Mendelssohn

Translation: Grant us peace graciously, Lord God, in our time; It is indeed no other who could fight for us than you, our God alone.

5. Liebesgram (from *Spanisches Liederspiel*)

Robert Schumann

Translation: One day, one day, O my mind, you will be at peace. Love's ardor will not leave you alone. In the cool earth, there you sleep well and without suffering; you will be at peace. What you have not found in life, when it has vanished, will be given to you. Then without wounds you will be at peace.

BRITANNIA - Spring 2015

6. Adiemus (from *Songs of Sanctuary*)

Karl Jenkins

"Adiemus" is, quite simply, the twentieth-century definition of 'classical crossover.' In 1995, "Adiemus" ensured that this Welsh composer of advertising music would burst forth into the mainstream. As with so many pieces of classical music, "Adiemus's" success in the late twentieth century came from its use on a television advertisement – in this case, a Delta Airlines commercial. Jenkins's music was actually commissioned by the airline and then was developed further by Jenkins into a full-blown classical work. Despite the title looking like Latin, the lyrics are not written in a known language. The song itself mixes influences from African music, Celtic music and Native American music, and the same goes with the lyrics.

AMAZING GRACE - Fall 2015

7. Bonse aba

African folk song

Translation: All who have embraced Him have been given the right to be called the Children of God. Children of God for eternity. To be called the Children of God. *Soloist, Sylvie Mwila-Jonath*

8. Zebola

African drum

"Zebola" is a drum piece performed by Tshindu Mia Kongo, two from a group of talented musicians from Brazzaville, Congo. It was a thrill to listen and watch them perform.

9. Dry Bones

African-American spiritual

This is the story of the prophet Ezekiel. God took Ezekiel and showed him a valley that was filled with dry bones. They were scattered around and there was no life in them. God spoke to Ezekiel and asked him, "Can these bones live again?" Ezekiel replied that only the Lord knew the answer to that. Then God spoke to Ezekiel and said, "Speak to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, listen to the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: I am going to put flesh and muscles on you and cover you with skin. I will put breath into you and you will come to life.'" So Ezekiel spoke the message just as God told him. As he spoke, there was a rattling noise across the valley and the bones came together and formed complete skeletons. Then muscles and flesh formed over the bones and skin covered their bodies. Finally, the winds came and filled

the bodies with breath and they came alive! The reviving of the dry bones signified God's plan for Israel's future national restoration. Putting "breath" by God's Spirit into the bones showed that God would not only restore them physically but also spiritually.

10. Ain'a That Good News

African-American spiritual

Enslaved people in the plantation South drew on native rhythms and their African heritage. For them, spirituals were religious folk songs, often rooted in biblical stories, woven together, sung, and passed along from one enslaved generation to another. "Ain'a That Good News" is a spiritual that makes the present bearable and that says beyond this world there is victory: I'm going to get my crown. I'm going to be regal.

IN PRAISE OF MUSIC - Spring 2016

11. Dona nobis pacem (from *Lord Nelson Mass*)

Franz Joseph Haydn

One of the major works on our 50th anniversary concert was the *Lord Nelson Mass*, the work sung in the first Richmond Symphony Chorus (now the Contra Costa Chorale) and Orchestra concert 50 years before. This extended *Dona nobis pacem*, in contrast to the usual supplicatory prayer, is almost operatic in style, typical of Haydn at his most exuberant.

Translation: Grant us peace.

ETERNAL LIGHT - Fall 2017

12. Agnus Dei-Lux Aeterna (from *Lux Aeterna*)

Morten Lauridsen

The final movement in Morten Lauridsen's *Lux Aeterna* is an absolutely stunning setting of the sacred text. Here, Lauridsen begins with the "Agnus Dei" text before reprising music and text from the first movement "Introit," causing the text and music to come full circle. This is then followed by the text "May light eternal shine upon them. O Lord, in the company of thy Saints for ever and ever; for thou are merciful. Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. Alleluia. Amen.

FOOD OF LOVE - Spring 2018

13. If music be the food of love

David Dickau

The romantic style of this setting is lush, expressive, and perfectly fashioned for the text. "If music be the food of love, sing on, sing on, sing on till I am filled with joy..."

14. O mistress mine

Emma Lou Diemer

Emma Lou Diemer wrote a collection of *Three Shakespeare Madrigals* using words from three different Shakespeare comedies. "O mistress mine" comes from *Twelfth Night*.

15. Who is Sylvia (from *Shakespeare Songs*)

George Shearing

This is the first of two ENTIRELY different settings of the same text. This is a sublime setting of the "Who is Sylvia" text from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

16. Who is Sylvia

P.D.Q. Bach

So yes, we go from the sublime to the quite ridiculous in this P.D.Q. Bach rendition of the same text as the previous Shearing setting. Listen for the train and hang on!

BERNSTEIN & COPLAND - Fall 2019

17. Chichester Psalms – Movement 1

Leonard Bernstein

The opening movement of *Chichester Psalms* presents the entire Psalm 100 – “Make a joyful noise to the Lord” – but not before a loud, dissonant, rousing verse from Psalm 108 commands the audience’s attention and introduces the entire work: *Urah, hanevel, v’chinor! A-irah shaḥar!* (“Awake, psaltery and harp! I will rouse the dawn!”)

18. Hoe-down (from Rodeo)

Aaron Copland, arr. Morley

This piece was originally written for the opera, *Rodeo*, but Copland later constructed a symphonic suite from the original work, which includes “Hoe-down.” The performer and arranger of this piece for piano is the Chorale’s amazingly talented accompanist, Martin Morley.

19. Zion’s Walls (from Old American Songs)

Aaron Copland

This is a revivalist song attributed to American composer John G. McCurry, who compiled 222 pieces in the 1855 songbook *The Social Harp*. This is one of many pieces arranged for chorus by Copland, who was very interested in preserving hymns, Native American melodies, and African-American spirituals.

SING-ALONG!!

20. Ode to Joy (from Ninth Symphony) - Fall 2014

Ludwig von Beethoven

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore you, God of glory, Lord of love.
Hearts unfold like flow’rs before you, op’ning to the sun above
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away,
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day!
2. All your works with joy surround you, Earth and heav’n reflect your rays,
Stars and angels sing around you Center of unbroken praise,
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flow’ry meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain praising you eternally!
3. Mortals, join the mighty chorus, which the morning stars began,
God’s own love is reigning o’er us, joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife.
Joyful music leads us sunward in the triumph song of life.