



Music

VIVA VOCE CHORAL SERIES

AND ON EARTH, PEACE



AVANTI CHAMBER SINGERS

Rachel Rensink-Hoff, Artistic Director

Lesley Kingham, Pianist

Timothy White, Guest Artist

Saturday, November 24, 2018

St. Thomas' Anglican Church

St. Catharines, ON

Avanti
CHAMBER SINGERS

One hundred years after the end of the First World War, as we look back to Remembrance Day and forward to the holiday season, we recall the moving stories surrounding the Christmas Truce of 1914, when soldiers along the Western Front put aside their weapons, emerged from the trenches and joined together in song.



PROGRAM

*Canadian composer

I

(please withhold applause until end of this section)

It's a Long Way to Tipperary

Harry Williams and Jack Judge

It's Long Way to Tipperary was written in 1912 as a music hall ditty. Its theme is nostalgia for home. After a Daily Mail correspondent wrote about an Irish regiment singing this song as they marched through Boulogne in August 1914, other units in the British Army adopted it as their unofficial marching anthem. The song became so popular that German soldiers also sang it.

*It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go.
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know!
Goodbye, Piccadilly,
Farewell, Leicester Square!
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there.*

Keep the Home Fires Burning

Ivor Novello
(1893-1951)

Published on October 8, 1914, this song was the first big hit for Welsh composer Ivor Novello. The lyrics were written by his American friend Lena Ford. Novello enlisted in The Royal Naval Air Service in June 1916 and after crashing two airplanes, he was moved to a desk job for the rest of the war.

*They were summoned from the hillside
They were called in from the glen,
And the country found them ready
At the stirring call for men.
Let no tears add to their hardships
As the soldiers pass along,
And although your heart is breaking
Make it sing this cheery song*

*Keep the home fires burning,
While your hearts are yearning,
Though your lads are far away
They dream of home.
There's a silver lining
Through the dark clouds shining,
Turn the dark cloud inside out
'Til the boys come home.*

*Overseas there came a pleading,
"Help a nation in distress."
And we gave our glorious laddies,
Honour bade us do no less,
For no gallant son of freedom
To a tyrant's yoke should bend,
And a noble heart must answer
To the sacred call of "Friend."*

II

(please withhold applause until end of this section)

In Flanders Fields

John Butler*

(b. 1944)

Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae, a soldier and physician from Guelph, was in charge of a field hospital during the Second Battle of Ypres. He was inspired to write this poem on May 3, 1915 after presiding over the funeral of a close friend who died in that brutal fight. It was finally published by the British magazine Punch in December 1915 having been first rejected by The Spectator. John McCrae died of pneumonia in January 1918 and is buried in France.

*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.*

In Splendoribus Sanctorum

James MacMillan

(b. 1959)

*In the splendor of the saints,
from the womb before the daystar
I have begotten you.*

For the Fallen

Eleanor Daley*

(b. 1955)

Robert Laurence Binyon (1869 -1943), was an English poet, dramatist and art historian. He wrote this poem a few weeks after the outbreak of war in 1914 upon learning that the British troops had suffered great casualties at the Battle of Mons in August and at the First Battle of the Marne in September. It was published in The Times on September 21, 1914.

*With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.*

*Solemn the drums thrill: Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres.*

***There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.***

*They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,
They fell with their faces to the foe.*

***They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.***

*They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.*

*But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;*

*As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.*

III

(please withhold applause until end of this section)

POEM. *Anthem for Doomed Youth*

Wilfred Owen
(1893-1918)

Read by Paul Miller

Wilfred Owen was an English soldier and is considered one of the great antiwar poets. His grim words about the true horrors of war contrast vividly with the contemporary propaganda about valour and the glory of death for one's country. Although he was sent home from the battlefield with shell shock, he returned to the front in August 1918 and was killed one week before the armistice on November 4, 1918. This poem was one of five that were published before his death.

Kyrie (from *Missa Brevis*)

Giovanni Palestrina
(1525-1594)

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.

Notre Père

Maurice Duruflé
(1902-1986)

*Our Father in Heaven,
hallowed by thy name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.*

IV

(please withhold applause until end of this section)

READING. *World War I, Part 2*

Jim Reynolds

I Had No Time to Hate

Nathan Howe
(b. 1982)

The American lyric poet, Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) spent her life in Amherst, Massachusetts. This poem was one of more than 1,800 that her sister Lavinia discovered after Emily's premature death at age 55. The poet bemoans the brevity of life and makes the choice to love rather than to hate.

*I had no time to hate, because
The grave would hinder me,
And life was not so ample I
Could finish enmity.
Nor had I time to love, but since
Some industry must be,
The little toil of love, I thought,
Was large enough for me.*

Rabbi Nathan of Breslov was the chief disciple of the more famous Chassidic Rabbi Nachman of Breslov. He came to prominence during a time of widespread persecution from the Czar and is most famous for penning "A Prayer for Peace" that is now incorporated into Shabbat services. Kurt Knecht has set this English translation of the text.

*Nation shall not lift up sword against nation.
May it be your will to undo wars and bloodshed from the earth,
and spread a great and wondrous peace in the world.
All who dwell on the earth will recognize and know the whole truth.
We did not come into this world for conflict and strife.
We did not come into this world for hatred and jealousy.
We did not come into this world for bickering and bloodshed.
We only come into the world to know you.
May you be blessed forever.*

INTERMISSION

V

(please withhold applause until end of this section)

Stille Nacht

Franz Gruber
(1787-1863)

Daniel McColgan, soloist

This carol, with lyrics penned by Father Joseph Mohr in 1816, was first performed on Christmas Eve 1818 in the Austrian village of Oberndorf. For many years, this beloved carol was believed to have been written by more famous composers like Beethoven, Haydn or Mozart. A manuscript discovered in 1995 confirmed Mohr and Gruber as the authors of the text and tune. Below is the English translation of the original German text.

*Silent Night, holy night
All creatures sleep;
the holy couple alone keeps watch
Beautiful boy with curly hair
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace*

POEM. *Christmas In the Trenches*

John McCutcheon
(b. 1952)

Read by Tim Slade

John McCutcheon, an American singer/songwriter, composed these lyrics in 1984. According to McCutcheon, the events depicted in this ballad were related to him by German soldiers that he met while on tour in Denmark. The text is narrated from the perspective of a British soldier from Liverpool.

Silent Night

trans. John Freeman Young
(1820-1885)

*Silent night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright,
Round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.*

*Silent Night, holy night,
shepherds quake, at thy sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing "alleluia".
Christ the Saviour is born,
Christ the Saviour is born.*

READING. *Recollection of Christmas Day, 1914*

Private Francis Edward Sumpter

Read by James Bourne

The son of a shoemaker, Frank Sumpter joined the London Rifle Brigade and sailed to France in October of 1914 when he was only 17. He died at 102 in the Chelsea Pensioners' Barracks in London but neither of his older brothers survived the war. When Frank was 89, he was interviewed about his experiences in the war and his recollections can be heard at the Imperial War Museum (GB) website.

O Tannenbaum

Traditional 16th century folk tune

The lyrics of O Tannenbaum were composed by August Zarnack and Ernst Anschütz in the early 19th century. Zarnack wrote the first verse, which contains no reference to Christmas, as a homage to the faithful, sturdy fir tree. It wasn't until Anschütz added the second and third verses that the song assumed its place among well-known Christmas carols. This song was also sung by the soldiers on that night.

*O fir tree, O fir tree,
How faithful are your branches.
You're not just green during summertime,
But also in wintertime, when it snows,
O fir tree, O fir tree,
How faithful are your branches.*

READING. *Letter from the Front December 28, 1914*

Sergeant Spence Sanders

Read by Tim Stacey

Sergeant Sanders of the Gordon Highlanders, was born in 1890 and sailed to France on November 10 in 1914, the year after the death of his parents. On Christmas Day in 1914, his trench was separated from the Germans by a mere 50 yards of frozen mud covered with bodies. He wrote this letter to his older sister Winifred Noel Sanders three days after Christmas.

After the War

arr. Mark Sirett*
(b. 1952)

This song was first performed by Sarah Slean in the film "Passchendaele". It relates the experiences of a Canadian soldier at the Third Battle of Ypres.

*After the guns are silent
After your wounds have healed
After those crosses been planted in all those fields
After that long boat ride all the way across the sea
And after this train carries thee
I will love you after the war
Love you for always, forever more
I will love you after the war
Forever, for always and more
After your boots dry and the tobacco is all but gone
Along with all those post cards you've carried under your arm
After I remember all the words I could not say
And after this long night fades away
After this blackbird lifts from up off your chest
And after your soul takes its final rest
My love I forgive you, you never planned to die
And love, I'll place two pennies over your eyes*

VI

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Walter Kent, Kim Gannon & Buck Ram

Paul Miller, soloist

"I'll Be Home for Christmas" was recorded in 1943 by Bing Crosby, who scored a top ten hit with the song. Originally written to honour the Second World War soldiers overseas who longed to be home during the holidays, it has become a Christmas standard.

O Holy Night

Adolph Adams
(1803-1856)

Melissa-Marie Shriner, soloist

"O Holy Night" was composed in 1847, using a French text by Placide Cappeau (1808-1877). In 1855, John S. Dwight (1813-1893) wrote the English lyrics.

VII

The Shepherds Sing

Bob Chilcott
(b. 1955)

Natalie Watson, soloist

British composer, conductor and former member of the well-known vocal group the King's Singers, Bob Chilcott, set this seasonal text by Welsh-born poet George Herbert (1593-1633).

*The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is Thy word: the streams, Thy grace
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Outsing the daylight hours.
Then will we chide the sun for letting night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I find a sun
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly,
As frost-nipped suns look sadly.
Then will we sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till even His beams sing, and my music shine.*

How Can I Keep From Singing?

arr. Sarah Quartel*
(b. 1982)

Gisela Reimer, Melissa-Marie Shriner,
Natalie Watson & Emese Zaduban, soloists

Also known as "My Life Flows on in Endless Song," this nineteenth century hymn of gentle hope and profound joy by American Robert Wadsworth Lowry is set here by young Canadian composer, Sarah Quartel.

*My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation;
Thro' all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?*

*What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Saviour liveth;
What though the darkness gather round?
Songs in the night he giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?
I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smooths,
Since first I learned to love it,
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing;
All things are mine since I am his—
How can I keep from singing?*

Evening Prayer

Ola Gjeilo
(b. 1978)

Commissioned by Charles Bruffy and the Phoenix Chorale in 2010, Norwegian American composer, Ola Gjeilo set this prayerful text by St. Augustine.

*Watch, O Lord,
with those who wake,
or watch or weep tonight,
and give your angels charge
over those who sleep.
Tend your sick ones,
Rest your weary ones;
bless your dying ones;
soothe your suffering ones;
pity your afflicted ones;
shield your joyous ones;
and all for your love's sake.
Amen.*



A special thank you to St. Thomas' Anglican Church for use of this beautiful venue.

AVANTI CHAMBER SINGERS

SOPRANO

Carol Dohn*, Sharree Eidt*, Mary-Teresa Franceschini*, Shelley Griffin*, Pat Hartman*, Nancy Lang, Gisela Reimer+, Melissa-Marie Shriner*, Natalie Watson*, Emese Zaduban

ALTO

Liz Bonisteel, Janice Coles, Carol Gaspari*, Rachel Janecek+, Karen Orlandi, Annie Slade*, Janice Slade*+, Lori Reimer-Wiebe*, Carmen Witten

TENOR

Casey Heemskerk, Aron Hoff, Daniel McColgan, Tim Stacey*+, James van den Brink*

BASS

James Bourne, Paul Miller, Jim Reynolds*, Majid Hassas Roudsari*, Tim Slade*+, Henk Vanden Beukel, Paul Wiebe*

**current or former Brock University students, staff or faculty | +Avanti executive*

Timothy White is a native of Hamilton, Ontario and serves as trumpet soloist and leader of the Rondeau Brass Quintet. He earned a Master of Music degree from the University of Michigan where he studied trumpet with Ramon Parcells of the Detroit Symphony and Armando Ghitalla of the Boston Symphony. His conducting teachers included Donald Shlieker and Gustav Meier. He has played in the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra, Symphony Nova Scotia, and the Niagara Symphony. Tim performs throughout southern Ontario as a soloist, freelance trumpeter, clinician, and is the trumpet instructor at Brock and McMaster University.

Lesley Kingham graduated with a Masters in Pipe Organ Performance and Literature from the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana in 1996, studying under Dr. Craig Cramer. Throughout the program she served as the liturgical assistant at the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. She received her Bachelor of Music from the University of Western Ontario in 1994, at which time she was awarded the gold medal for pipe organ performance. During her studies Ms. Kingham was the assistant organist at St James Westminster Anglican Church and accompanist for the Amabile Boys' Choirs. From 1996 to 2011 she was the staff accompanist and keyboard harmony instructor at Brock University. She now primarily coaches and performs for vocal students at the university in addition to serving as the choir accompanist. Lesley is currently the organist and music director at St Thomas' Anglican Church. She is in demand as an accompanist across Niagara and operates a private teaching studio.

Dr. Rachel Rensink-Hoff is Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music Education at Brock University and Artistic Director of the Avanti Chamber Singers. Former conductor of the McMaster University Choir and founder of the McMaster Women's Choir, Dr. Rensink-Hoff completed her Doctorate and Master of Music degree at Western University, pursuing additional studies at the Eastman School of Music Conducting Institute, the Voice Care Network of St. John's University, Minnesota, and the University of Toronto. She has engaged in masterclasses under conductors Helmuth Rilling, Joseph Flummerfelt, Anton Armstrong, Dale Warland and the late Sir David Willcocks. Vice-President of Programming for Choral Canada and Past-President of Choirs Ontario, Rachel Rensink-Hoff is the 2014 winner of the Leslie Bell Prize for Choral Conducting awarded by the Ontario Arts Council. In 2015, her McMaster Women's Choir was awarded first prize in the National Choral Competition for Amateur Choirs of the CBC and Choral Canada and was nominated for the Excellence in Teaching Award at McMaster University. Rachel works frequently as adjudicator, conference presenter and workshop clinician locally and across Canada. She has given international presentations at the National Conference of the American Choral Directors' Association in Minneapolis and the World Symposium on Choral Music in Barcelona. As guest conductor, she led the 2018 Nova Scotia Youth Choir and returned to Nova Scotia this past summer for their Sing Summer choral program.



UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

LESSONS & CAROLS

Sunday, December 9 4:00 pm
St. Thomas' Anglican Church

CIVIC CAROL SERVICE

Tuesday, December 11 12:00 pm
St. Thomas' Anglican Church

VOICES RAISED

*Celebration of the raw power of the human voice,
with premieres by James Moffett & Laura Hawley.*

February 23, 2019 7:30 pm
St. Thomas' Anglican Church

THE ROAD HOME

*Musical reflections on home & hospitality,
with guest Marta Agnieszka on oboe.*

April 27, 2019 7:30 pm
St. Thomas' Anglican Church



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