



Music

VIVA VOCE!

Choral Series 2017-2018

Semper Avanti | Ever Forward

Avanti Chamber Singers

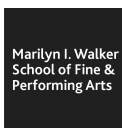
Rachel Rensink-Hoff, Artistic Director

Lesley Kingham, Pianist

Saturday, November 18, 2017

St. Thomas Anglican Church

St. Catharines ON



Brock University
Faculty of Humanities



Welcome to the first concert of our 2017-2018 season!

Tonight's program celebrates many things. First, we applaud the successes of a wonderful ensemble, the Avanti Chamber Choir, now in its eleventh year, founded by my predecessor, Dr. Harris Loewen. I am thrilled to be working with Avanti as its new Artistic Director and look forward to many exciting programs ahead. We have enjoyed just over two months together and the skill and dedication of this wonderful group of fine singers has been inspiring. *Avanti*, in Italian, means "forward" and as our title suggests, we continue to move forward and hope that you join us as we begin a new chapter of performing for and engaging the Niagara community through choral singing.

To begin our program, we celebrate the gift of time with three prominent composers whose contrasting settings of the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* from the liturgical mass reflect a distinct evolution of musical style and human sentiment. From inward reflection to outer displays of mourning and joy, the diversity of these works offers an exciting range of colours with which to open our concert. The latter section of the first half looks at time from the perspective of each passing year. Many of us reflect on time in a special way when one year draws to an end and another approaches. Our excerpt from Jonathan Dove's "Passing of the Year" declares to this effect the "ringing out" of the old and "ringing in" of the new. The journey from the dusk of evening to the dawn of a new day across the second half of our program gives voice to the range of human experience: loss, pain, acceptance, remembrance, reminiscence and hope.

We hope you enjoy our program tonight, and we look forward to seeing you at our next concert.
Rachel Rensink-Hoff

February 17, 2018 7:30 pm | St. Thomas Anglican Church

WITH STRINGS ATTACHED

STRINGS AND VOICES COME TOGETHER TO STIR THE HEART AND SOUL

Beethoven's *Elegischer Gesang*,
Ola Gjeilo's *Dark Night of the Soul*, Whitacre's *Hebrew Love Songs*,
Sonnet by Laura Hawley and other songs of love & loss.

April 28, 2018 7:30 pm | St. Thomas Anglican Church

BOUNDLESS

BASK IN THE WONDER AND MYSTERY OF THIS WORLD AND BEYOND

Lux Aeterna settings by Lauridsen & Elgar,
Christine Donkin's *In Paradisum*, Trent Worthington's *And Einstein Said*,
with new works by Kristopher Fulton & Pärt Uusberg.



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www.avantichambersingers.com

PROGRAM

I Centuries of Sound

Kyrie & Gloria

from *Missa Aeterna Christi Munera*
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina
(1525-1594)

Michael Sinton, *tenor*

Kyrie & Gloria

from *Missa Brevis K. 49* in G major
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Natalie Watson, *soprano*
Liz Bonisteel, *alto*
Tim Stacey, *tenor*
Paul Miller, *bass*

Kyrie & Gloria

from *Missa Pax*
Timothy Corlis
(b. 1972)

Janice Coles, *alto*

II Interlude

Andante in C Major K. 315

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Janice Slade, *flute*

III Passing of the Year

Weihnachten

from *Sechs Sprüche*
Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

NOTES

Tonight's concert opens with three beautifully contrasting settings of *Kyrie & Gloria* spanning five centuries. We begin with two movements from Palestrina's *Missa Aeterna Christi Munera*, a work that displays his art at its simplest and finest. Written late in his life, it is a work that is more transparent and less texturally complex than his earlier compositions. The clarity of vocal writing and fluency of melodic lines inspired many future composers including Bach and Debussy.

Mozart's Mass in G Major (K. 49) is his earliest surviving mass, written when he was just twelve years old, but recognized and celebrated for its "beauty in simplicity." Ordinarily his masses are accompanied by strings, but tonight we perform these movements with piano.

The final *Kyrie-Gloria* set is taken from a contemporary composition by Canadian composer Timothy Corlis. The work was commissioned by Noel Edison and the Elora Festival Singers and was premiered in Winnipeg in 2014. The work features interesting harmonic twists and turns and a varied tapestry of choral textures.

*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.
Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace to all those of good will.
We praise thee. We bless thee. We worship thee. We glorify thee.
We give thanks to thee according to thy great glory.
Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty, the only begotten Son.
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.
Thou who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.
Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us.
For Thou alone art holy. Thou alone art Lord. Thou alone art most high.
With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.*

Mendelssohn wrote *Weihnachten* on Christmas Day of 1843 for the cathedral choir in Berlin. The polychoral and imitative writing in this piece display Mendelssohn's admiration of the Baroque style. At the same time, the wandering tonal center and lush 7th chord circle of fifth progressions and dense homophonic textures epitomize the musical language of the nineteenth century.

*Rejoice, ye people of the earth, and praise God!
The redeemer is come, whom the Lord has promised.
He has revealed his righteousness to the world. Hallelujah!*

Ring Out, Wild Bells
from *The Passing of the Year*
Jonathan Dove
(b. 1959)

A strong pulse and dancing rhythms characterize the music of British composer Jonathan Dove. In *The Passing of the Year* (a seven-movement song cycle), Dove sets overlapping repeating patterns, matching points of breathless energy and excitement against sublime moments of calm and reflection. Here we present the final movement to celebrate the “ringing out” of the year.

*Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.
Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.
Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.*

Alfred Lord Tennyson

INTERMISSION

IV Evening Fades

**Three Songs from Emily
Dickinson**
William Keith Rogers
(b. 1921)

It is no wonder that Emily Dickinson’s poetry has been set to music by countless composers. In fact, Dickinson was a musician before she began writing poetry. Her poems are filled with vividly portrayed sounds of thunder, bobolinks, bells, crickets, bees, whippoorwills, cathedral organs, clocks ticking, and in the case of this particular song cycle, depictions of a night sky, a steam locomotive winding through a hilly landscape, and the movement of one’s heart from hope to resignation.

I

*Lightly stepped a yellow star
To its lofty place,
Loosed the Moon her silver hat
From her lustral face.
All of evening softly lit
As an astral hall -
"Father," I observed to Heaven,
"You are punctual."*

III

*The heart asks pleasure - first,
And then excuse from pain.
And then those little anodynes
That deaden suffering.
And then, to go to sleep;
And then, if it should be
The will of its Inquisitor,
The liberty to die.*

II

*I like to see it lap the miles,
And lick the valleys up,
And stop to feed itself at tanks;
And then, prodigious, step
Around a pile of mountains,
And, supercilious, peer
In shanties by the sides of roads;
And then a quarry pare, To fit its sides,
and crawl between,
Complaining all the while
In horrid, hooting stanza;
Then chase itself down hill
And neigh like Boanerges;
Then, punctual as a star,
Stop - docile and omnipotent -
At its own stable door.*

Emily Dickinson

Evening Song | Esti Dal

Zoltán Kodaly
(1882-1967)

Emese Zaduban, *soprano*

The Hungarian folk song, *Esti dal*, translates as 'Evening Song' and is one of Kodaly's most famous choral works. A young soldier fighting for the Austro-Hungarian Empire prays to God for shelter and safekeeping through the night. We present it this evening in both Hungarian and in English. What follows is a translation of the original Hungarian text.

*Evening darkness overtook me near the woods;
I have put my coat under my head, as a pillow,
I have put my hands together
To pray to the Lord, like this:
Oh, my Lord, give me a place to sleep,
I am weary with wandering, walking around, and hiding,
With living on foreign land.
May the Lord give me a good night,
May He send me a holy angel, and encourage our hearts' dreams.*

Farewell

John Shea
(b. 1964)

Natalie Watson, *soprano*
Krystyna MacKay, *alto*
Janice Slade, *claves*

Flamenco rhythms highlight this image of sunset on the beach, as the romance of the day fades and the new moon introduces the surge of another tide.

*The vast arc of a sunset has come to earth.
Soft moist sand, yielding up the footsteps, but with regret.
The air a sweet caress, while the sound of flamenco, faint and receding,
Leaves an ache. And now the tide has come, and the moon is new.*

Lauri Coltri

V Night Falls

Good-Night

Matthew Emery
(b. 1991)

This short enchanting piece by young Canadian composer Matthew Emery, offers a serene portrait of sleep, rest and parting.

*The lark is silent in his nest,
The breeze is sighing in its flight,
Sleep, Love, and peaceful be thy rest.
Good-night, my love, good-night, good-night.
Sweet dreams attend thee in thy sleep,
To soothe thy rest till morning's light,
And angels round thee vigil keep.
Good-night, my love, good-night, good-night.
Sleep well, my love, on night's dark breast,
And ease thy soul with slumber bright;
Be joy but thine and I am blest.
Good-night, my love, good-night, good-night.*

Paul Laurence Dunbar

SOLO SET

Melissa-Marie Shriner, *soprano*

Love and longing are expressed in this set of three solo works by two prominent twentieth century composers, Aaron Copland and Richard Strauss.

I. Heart, We Will Forget Him

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

*Heart, we will forget him
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.
When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim,
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!*

Emily Dickinson

II. Morgen, Op. 27, No. 4

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

*And tomorrow the sun will shine again, and on the path I will take,
it will unite us again, we happy ones, upon this sun-breathing earth...
And to the shore, the wide shore with blue waves, we will descend quietly
and slowly; we will look longingly into each other's eyes
and the silence of happiness will descend upon us.*

John Henry MacKay

III. Allerseelen, Op. 10, No. 8

Richard Strauss

*Place in the vase the final autumn roses
and put the crimson asters on display;
and let us talk again of love together, as once in May.
Give me your hand, and secretly I'll clasp it.
If people see, I care not what they say.
Give me just one now of your sweetest glances, as then in May.
Each grave today abounds in flowers and fragrance
since for the dead this is a holy day.
Come to my heart, let me again embrace you, as once in May.*

Hermann von Gilm

In Remembrance

Jeffery Ames
(b. 1969)

Ames wrote this work in response to a tragic accident that took the life of his former choral student, along with her sister and father. The piece carries a message of healing, peace, hope and joy.

*May everlasting light shine upon them, O Lord. Turn to me and be
gracious, for my heart is in distress. Oh God, my God, why have you
forsaken me? My tears linger at night, but joy comes in the morning light.
Lord, in your infinite mercy, grant them rest, rest forevermore.*

Only In Sleep

Eriks Ešenvalds
(b. 1977)

Melissa-Marie Shriner, *soprano*

Sara Teasdale's nostalgic vision of childhood re-experienced through dreams is expressed in this simple verse and refrain style by Latvian composer, Eriks Ešenvalds. Subtleties of chord voicings, shifts from humming to the bright "ah" vowel, internal doublings of vocal lines and soaring descants serve to elevate the expressive qualities of the text. The soprano soloist heard at the opening returns at the close, lost in reverie, as her vocal line floats over one last pair of chordal oscillations, and fades to silence.

*Only in sleep, I see their faces,
Children I played with when I was a child,
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.
Only in sleep, Time is forgotten —
What may have come to them, who can know?
Yet we played last night as long ago,
And the dollhouse stood at the turn of the stair.
The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,
I met their eyes and found them mild —
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,
And for them am I too a child?*

Sara Teasdale

VI And Dawn Breaks

Light of a Clear Blue Morning

Dolly Parton | arr. Craig Hella Johnson
(b. 1962)

Liz Bonisteel, *alto*
Natalie Watson, Carol Dohn
& Krystyna MacKay, *trio*

Originally written by Dolly Parton in 1977 as part of her first self-produced album, *New Harvest...First Gathering*, this piece is arranged here by Craig Hella Johnson, Grammy-winning conductor of *Conspirare* and former artistic director of *Chanticleer*.

*It's been a long dark night, and I've been waiting for the morning.
It's been a long hard fight, but I see a brand new day a-dawning.
I've been looking for the sunshine, 'cause I ain't seen it in so long.
Everything's going to work out fine.
Everything's going to be alright. It's going to be okay.
I can see the light of a clear blue morning.
I can see the light of a brand new day.*

Unclouded Day

Traditional | arr. Shawn Kirchner
(b. 1970)

This is the first of three gospel movements from *Heavenly Home: Three America Songs*. A straightforward first verse and chorus are followed by two verses in which traditional bluegrass vocal stylings combine with counterpoint and fugue elements.

*Oh, they tell me of a home far beyond the skies,
Oh, they tell me of a home far away;
Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise,
Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.
Oh, the land of cloudless day,
Oh, the land of an unclouded sky,
Oh, they tell me of a home where no storm clouds rise,
Oh, they tell me of an unclouded day.
Oh, they tell me of a home where my friends have gone,
Oh, they tell me of that land far away,
Where the tree of life in eternal bloom
Sheds its fragrance through the unclouded day.
Oh, they tell me of a King in His beauty there,
And they tell me that mine eyes shall behold
Where He sits on a throne that is bright as the sun
In the city that is made of gold.*

Josiah Kelley Alwood



The Avanti Chamber Singers wish to thank
St. Thomas Anglican Church for use of this beautiful venue.

AVANTI CHAMBER SINGERS

**current or former Brock University students, staff or faculty*

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, Sheryl Janzen, Krystyna MacKay*, Karen Orlandi, Janice Slade*, Jan Venema, Carmen Witten
Tenor	Casey Heemskerck, Aron Hoff, Heather Rodman*, Michael Sinton, Tim Stacey*, James van den Brink*
Bass	Kenton Janzen, Paul Miller, Jim Reynolds*, Tim Slade*, Henk Vandenbeukel

LESLEY KINGHAM, PIANIST

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.

JANICE SLADE, FLUTE

Janice Slade earned an Honours Bachelor of Music degree in flute performance from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Bachelor of Education degree from Brock University. She is currently an elementary school principal with the District School Board of Niagara. Janice has played with the Niagara Symphony and is a member of the Rainbow Trio. She is also the past president of the Niagara Youth Orchestra and a longtime member of Avanti Chamber Singers.

MELISSA-MARIE SHRINER, SOPRANO

Soprano Melissa-Marie Shriner is well known as a versatile performer in recitals, concerts, and self-produced shows, throughout southern Ontario and upstate New York. With her feet solidly planted in both the classical and jazz worlds, Ms Shriner regularly performs as soloist with the Avanti Chamber Singers, as a guest soloist with Choralis Camerata, with The Melissa-Marie Shriner Jazz Trio, as the featured artist for the In The Village Concert Series, the TD Niagara Jazz Festival, the Twilight Jazz Series, along with various other musical incarnations. Ms Shriner has most recently finished a concert tour, performing in solo recitals in Europe, performing throughout Hungary, which included performances of world premieres of Canadian-Hungarian compositions, recorded live for National Radio. Her latest jazz endeavours include her sophomore jazz recording, A Christmas Love Song, a throw-back to the classic Holiday recordings of the 1940's and 50's, which is being released on November 25, 2017. Ms. Shriner holds a solid reputation as a vocal pedagogue mainly through Melissa Shriner Music Studio in Jordan Station, and serves as vocal/choral workshop clinician at various high schools in the Niagara Region. Ms Shriner is the creative force behind the successful "In the Village" concert series, now in its 7th season.

RACHEL RENSINK-HOFF, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 master-classes under conductors Helmuth Rilling, Joseph Flummerfelt, Anton Armstrong, Dale Warland and the late Sir David Willcocks. Vice-President of Programming for Choral Canada, 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. That same year she was nominated for the Excellence in Teaching Award at McMaster University. Rachel publishes regularly and works frequently as guest conductor, adjudicator, conference presenter and clinician. Most recently, she presented a lecture on Canadian and American women choral composers at the 2017 national conference of the American Choral Directors' Association, offered a presentation on behalf of Choral Canada at the 2017 World Symposium on Choral Music in Barcelona, and served as guest conductor of the 2017 Nova Scotia Provincial Youth Choir.