



LOUISVILLE
masterchorale

AMERICAN LANDSCAPES



Sunday, May 21, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

HARVEY BROWNE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

INTRODUCING



Dr. John Dickson

It gives us great pleasure to announce our new Artistic Director, Dr. John Dickson, who will begin his tenure with our 2023-2024 season. We are so fortunate to have gotten to know each other during his current role as Guest Conductor and we are happy that he will no longer be a "Guest". He brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and artistic vision to Louisville Master Chorale as we begin our 13th season.

John chose to return to live in Louisville after a distinguished teaching career that culminated as the Edward G. and Catherine M Galante Chair of Choral Music and Director of Choral Studies at the School of Music at Louisiana State University, following posts as Dean of the Townsend School of Music at Mercer University, and Director of Choral Studies and Chair of the Conducting Division at Texas Tech University. He had gotten to know and love Louisville during his tenure as Director of Choral Studies at the former Southern Seminary graduate School of Church Music from 1985-2000.

He has a rich history in international activities in conducting and choral master classes across Europe, from Moscow to Cambridge and extensive musical engagements in England inspired by his two sabbaticals at Cambridge University. Dr. Dickson is the founding artistic and music director for Coro Vocati, one of Atlanta's most accomplished professional chamber choirs. He was the founding director of the C.S. Lewis Oxbridge Choral Institute, a professional chorus serving the triennial symposium in Oxford and Cambridge. As chorus-master, Dr. Dickson has prepared choirs for such distinguished conductors as Sir David Willcocks, Michael Tilson Thomas, Lawrence Leighton Smith, Max Bragado-Darman, and David Hill.

Retired after 45 years as a collegiate choral music professor, he and his wife Becky, retired after 44 years as a critical care and heart nurse, have returned to Louisville. We hope you will join us in giving John and Becky Dickson a warm welcome back to Louisville, their chosen home, and share our excitement about what the future holds for Master Chorale under his direction.

AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

HORIZON'S LANDSCAPE

I THANK YOU GOD, FOR MOST THIS AMAZING DAY

DAN FORREST

THE LANDSCAPE OF FREEDOM

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

ARR. MOSES HOGAN

FENCES

ANDRÉ J. THOMAS

TO SIT AND DREAM

ROSEPHANYE POWELL

DAN-U-EL

KIRKE MECHEM
Gregory Rahming, Baritone

MLK

U2 ARR. BOB CHILCOTT
Nick Rowan, Tenor

ADAGIO FOR STRINGS

SAMUEL BARBER

THE LANDSCAPE OF OPPORTUNITY

CHOOSE SOMETHING LIKE A STAR

RANDALL THOMPSON

SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT

MORTEN LAURIDSEN

WE CAN MEND THE SKY

JAKE RUNESTAD
Emily Stewart, Soprano

THE LANDSCAPE OF FAITH

UNCLOUDED DAY

ARR. SHAWN KIRCHNER

BOUND FOR THE PROMISED LAND

ARR. MACK WILBERG.

DEATH SHALL NOT DESTROY MY COMFORT

ARR. MACK WILBERG

COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

ARR. MACK WILBERG

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The Kentucky Arts Council, the state arts agency, provides operating support to Louisville Master Chorale with state tax dollars and federal funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.



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LOUISVILLE
masterchorale

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Rental Music by Mack Wilberg, Bound for the Promised Land, Death shall not destroy my comfort and Come, thou fount of every blessing, published by Oxford University Press, provided by Boosey & Hawkes Inc., 250 West 57th Street, New York, New York

PRECONCERT PROGRAM



DR. JOHN R. HALE has been offering pre-concert lectures since the founding of the Louisville Master Chorale. This year we will be posting his lectures online the week before each concert, which will make these presentations available to a wider audience and also allow Dr. Hale to complement each lecture with copious illustrations that include portraits of the composers themselves, and images of the historic settings in which these masterpieces were originally performed. Dr. Hale is a graduate of Yale University, with a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and is both a distinguished instructor and author. He has published reports on his research in *Antiquity*, *The Journal of Roman Archaeology*, *Scientific American*, and other journals. In addition, his archaeological fieldwork and discoveries have been featured in documentaries on the Discovery and History channels.

When his first book, *Lords of the Sea: The Epic Story of the Athenian Navy and the Birth of Democracy*, was published in 2009, *The New York Times* reviewer called John Hale “an intellectually serious historian who knows how to tell war stories.” His engaging speaking style and commanding knowledge of the classical music repertoire are appreciated by concertgoers throughout our community.

TEXTS

I THANK YOU GOD FOR MOST THIS AMAZING DAY

i thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes (i who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay great happening illimitably earth) how should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any—lifted from the no of all nothing—human merely being doubt unimaginal You? (now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

e. e. cummings (music by Dan Forrest)

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

Refrain:

Joshua fit the battle of Jericho, Jericho, Jericho.
Joshua fit the battle of Jericho,
and the walls come tumbalin' down.
Talk about your kings of Gideon;
You can talk about your men of Saul;
But there's none like good old Joshua,
at the battle of Jericho. (Refrain)
Right up to the walls of Jericho
he marched with spear in hand.
“Go blow that ram-horn,” Joshua cried,
“‘cause the battle am in my hand.” (Refrain)

Then the lamb, ram, sheep horns begin to blow,
the trumpet begins to sound,
Joshua commanded the children to shout,
and the walls come a-tumbalin' down. (Refrain)

Traditional Spiritual (arranged by Moses Hogan)

FENCES

The day the universe was born,
Mountains rose and stars were torn
From the woven cloth of time,
And there were no fences.
Boundaries were not in the plan
For sky and ocean, earth and man,
Freedom's only ours to share
When there are no fences.
In photographs from far in space,
Earth and oceans have their place,
A graceful blanket, blue and green,
And there are no fences.
But man forgot somewhere in time,
The earth's not yours, or theirs, or mine,
And for children yet to be,
There must be no fences.
Borders, Boundaries, Walls and Wire,
Burn a soul, Burn a soul, Burn a soul,
With freedom's fire hope is born
When we decide there shall be no fences.
Today's the day we can decide
To mend the fabric we divide,
A seamless cloth of you and me,
Without any fences fences, fences!

Borders, Boundaries, Walls and Wire,
Burn a soul with freedom's fire,
Hope is born when we decide
There shall be no fences!

Lyrics by Niel Lorenz (Music by Andre' J. Thomas)

TO SIT AND DREAM

To sit and dream, to sit and read,
To sit and learn about the world
Outside our world of here and now--
Our problem world--
To dream of vast horizons of the soul,
Of dreams made whole,
Unfettered, free--help me!
All you who are dreamers too,
Help me to make
Our world anew.
I reach out my hand to you.

Langston Hughes (from "To You"; Music by Rosephanye Powell)

DAN-U-EL

BARITONE

I'm free! I'm free!
John Brown delivered me.
Come on, you people,
Sing with me!

CHORUS

He's free! He's free!

BARITONE and CHORUS

Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el,
Dan-u-el, Dan-u-el,
Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el,
And why not every man?
And why not everyone?

He delivered Daniel from the lion's den,
And Jonah from the belly of the whale,
And the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace,
So why not every man?
So why not everyone?
Didn't my Lord deliver Dan-u-el?
Yes, Oh thank you, my Lord.
So if my Lord delivered Dan-u-el,
Why not everyone?

BARITONE (with choral responses)

Now here's a verse, one more verse,
Come along and sing it with me.
You all know it's
the gospel truth
'Bout how John Brown set me free.

Don't you know the man who delivered me
And saved me from the devil's livin' hell?

So I named my baby Little John Brown,
And changed my name to Dan-u-el.

CHORUS and BARITONE

Didn't John Brown deliver Dan-u-el?
Yes, Oh thank you, John Brown.
So if John Brown delivered Dan-u-el
Why not everyone?

*Words from a traditional Spiritual, adapted, added to, and set by
Kirke Mechem*

MLK

Sleep, sleep tonight,
And may your dreams be realised,
If the thunder cloud passes rain
So let it rain, rain down on him
Mmm, so let it be
Mmm, so let it be

Sleep, sleep tonight
And may your dreams be realised
If the thunder cloud passes rain
So let it rain, let it rain
Rain on him

Words and music by U2 (arranged for choir by Bob Chilcott)

CHOOSE SOMETHING LIKE A STAR

O Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud –
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says "I burn."
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremitte,
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Robert Frost (music by Randall Thompson)

SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT

Sure on this shining night
Of star-made shadows round
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground

The late year lies down the north
All is healed, all is health
High summer holds the earth,
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wand'ring far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

James Agee (music by Morten Lauridsen)

WE CAN MEND THE SKY

Naftu

In my dream I saw a world free of violence
hunger
suffering
a world filled with love

Soo baxa!

Naftu orod bay kugu aamintaa.

Now awake in this world

I beg, let my dream come true.

Soo baxa!

Naftu orod bay kugu aamintaa.

If we come together, we can mend a crack in the sky.

Text by Warda Mohamed, 14-year-old Somali immigrant. Music by Jake Runestad. Somali translations:

Soo baxa—Let's go.

Naftu orod bay kugu aamintaa—To save your life, run with all your might.

Naftu—Life, soul

Orod—Run

UNCLOUDED DAY

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, the land of cloudless days,
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 King in His beauty there,

And they tell me that mine eyes shall behold
Where He sits on the throne that is bright as the sun
In the city that is made of gold.
Oh, the land of cloudless days,
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.

Words and music by Rev. J. K. Alwood (1828-1909)

Arranged by Shawn Kirchner

BOUND FOR THE PROMISED LAND

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
And cast a wishful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land
Where my possessions lie

There generous fruits that never fail
On trees immortal grow;
There rocks and hills, and brooks and vales
With milk and honey flow

[Chorus]

I am bound for the promised land,
I'm bound for the promised land;
Oh who will come and go with me?
I am bound for the promised land.

O the transporting, rapturous scene
That rises to my sight!
Sweet fields arrayed in living green
And rivers of delight!

When shall I reach that happy place
And be forever blest?
When shall I see my Father's face
And in His bosom rest?

[Chorus]

I am bound for the promised land,
I'm bound for the promised land;
Oh who will come and go with me?
I am bound for the promised land.

American Folk Hymn, arranged by Mack Wilberg

DEATH SHALL NOT DESTROY MY COMFORT

Death shall not destroy my comfort,
Christ shall guide me through the gloom;
Down He'll send some heav'nly convoy,
To escort my spirit home.

Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Oh, hallelujah! That I do;
Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Mourners, you may love Him too.

Jordan's stream shall not o'er flow me,
While my Savior's by my side;

Canaan, Canaan lies before me!
Soon I'll cross the swelling tide.

Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Oh, hallelujah! That I do;
Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Mourners, you may love Him too.

See the happy spirits waiting,
On the banks beyond the stream!
Sweet responses still repeating,
"Jesus! Jesus!" is their theme.

Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Oh, hallelujah! That I do;
Hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Mourners, you may love Him too.

Oh, hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Oh, hallelujah! That I do;
Oh hallelujah! How I love my Savior!
Mourners, you may love Him too.

Arranged by Mack Wilberg

COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING (2011) - THE TABERNACLE CHOIR.MP4

Come Thou fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace
Streams of mercy never ceasing
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it
Mount of Thy redeeming love

Here I raise my Ebenezer
Here by Thy great help I've come
And I hope by Thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home

Jesus sought me when a stranger
Wandering from the fold of God
He to rescue me from danger
Interposed His precious blood.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it
Prone to leave the God I love
Here's mu heart. I take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it,
Seal it for thy courts above.

Words Robert Robinson (1758) Hymn Tune Nettleton, early 19th century American Folk Hymn tradition. Arranged by Mack Wilberg

PROGRAM NOTES

What might one expect from a concert entitled "Americana" or even more specifically "American Landscapes"? Pieces like Copeland's *Rodeo* perhaps? Or his *Appalachian Spring*? Our director has chosen, instead, to focus more specifically on the experience of people in the American social or emotional landscapes: a song of Thanksgiving for being alive on "most this amazing day," six pieces that address themselves to freedom or the lack of it in American history, three that address in different ways the opportunity that America offers, and four that address the faith that has sustained Americans throughout its history (and return us to the theme of the first piece on the program). All of them are relevant to the contentious time we live in today.

All but one of the composers or arrangers of these pieces were born in America (Bob Chilcott was born in 1955 in Plymouth, United Kingdom), and with one exception they were all born in the 20th century (Randall Thompson was born in 1899). The texts range from the work of famous American poets (e e cummings, Langston Hughes, and Robert Frost), to hymn texts ("Come Thou Fount"), to spirituals ("Joshua fit the battle") to gospel ("Unclouded Day" and "Bound for the Promised Land"), to a recent text by an Irish rock band, and a poem by a 14-year old girl, a Somali immigrant to the USA. We are a religious nation, and there is (and has been) injustice among us.

I HORIZON'S LANDSCAPE

I THANK THEE GOD FOR MOST THIS AMAZING DAY

e. e. cummings's father's primary job was as a Unitarian minister, the Reverend Edward Cummings. He once "horribly shocked his pewholders by crying 'the Kingdom of Heaven is no special roof garden: it's inside you.'" About poetry, Cummings once wrote in a letter, "Nothing is quite as easy as using words like somebody else. We all of us do exactly this nearly all the time—and when we do it we are not poets." Hence Cummings's sometimes startling syntax or diction in his poems, which a thorough understanding of the history and grammar of English can help us understand. What, for example, do we make of the word "most" in the first line of this poem/prayer? It could modify the verb, "thank you" or the adjectival participle, "amazing," modifying "day"? The effect, typical of Cummings, could emphasize both.

Dan Forrest (b. 1978) was commissioned by the Atlanta Master Chorale to write the setting for this poem. I think both Cummings and his father would be pleased, and we draw closer by this powerful and heavenly setting to a Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

II THE LANDSCAPE OF FREEDOM

THE BATTLE OF JERICHO

In his "Preface" to *The Books of American Negro Spirituals*, first published as two separate volumes (1925 and 1926), the poet James Weldon Johnson asserts that "Generally speaking, the European concept of music is melody and the African concept is rhythm." Such a statement does not do justice to many of the very melodic spirituals or the complicated rhythmic music of many European composers. But it is true that an energetic rhythm can be the life blood of some spirituals. And if rhythm is a strong part of the music, Moses Hogan (b. 1957, d. 2003) will make that rhythm a strong part of his arrangement. And so it is with his arrangement of "The Battle of Jericho." In fact, the popularity of this spiritual is largely due to the energy both of its familiar story (Joshua 6:1-27), and of the music itself.

FENCES

The opening line of the first poem in *North of Boston*, Robert Frost's second book of poems (1914), is "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." He means something in the natural world. His neighbor insists (several times in the poem), "Good fences make good neighbors." By the end of the poem it's clear that Frost intends the neighbor's line to be ironic. But there is no irony in Niel Lorenz's text or André J. Thomas's music to "Fences." From a perspective of the history of the universe to the first photographs from space, it's clear that nature does not create fences, and we would be better off without them. The strong rhythm of the piece emphasizes the phrase "no fences" again and again.

TO SIT AND DREAM

From the poem "To You" by Langston Hughes (1901-1967), an important participant in the Harlem Renaissance, Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962) selects the lines she sets in "To Sit and Dream" with the goal of recognizing "our problem world" and to "make [it] anew." That Hughes would appreciate her setting is made clear by a verse he publishes in his children's book *The Book of Rhythms* (1954): "To make words sing / Is a wonderful thing— / Because in a song / Words last so long."

SONGS OF THE SLAVE: DAN-U-EL

Songs of the Slave: Dan-u-el is by Kirk Mechem (b. 1925), who writes in our score: "Dan-u-el has been adapted from my opera in progress on the still controversial abolitionist John Brown. In its fusion of drama and music, opera seemed the ideally extravagant medium to present the action and passion of the national struggle over slavery as epitomized in the larger-than-life figure of Brown...The scene is based on a real incident. In December 1858, Brown helped a slave family escape to Kansas from Missouri, and then led them to safety into Canada. During that time the mother gave birth to a boy whom she and her husband (the baritone soloist in Dan-u-el) named after John Brown... Some of the words come from the spiritual, 'Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?'; the others from my libretto. The music is original, although, naturally, I tried to give it the flavor of the great spiritual tradition."

MLK

The words and music of “MLK” come from the Irish rock group U2. It is the last work on their CD *The Unforgettable Fire*, and was intended to be a quieter but more focused (and more powerful) tribute to Martin Luther King than “Pride (In the Name of Love),” which appears on the same album. Bono had been inspired by King’s work for civil rights, partly because he had grown up during the Troubles in Ireland, his mother a protestant and his father a Catholic. But his understanding of and admiration for King was focused more clearly when he read *Let the Trumpet Sound: a Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* by Stephen B. Oates. There are echoes in the very simple text of U2’s “MLK” of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Bob Chilcott (b. 1955) has arranged U2’s music and words for SATB, with the lower voices taking the place of the keyboard drone beneath the very simple lyrics that Bono sings on the album.

ADAGIO FOR STRINGS

Samuel Barber (b. 1910, d. 1981) originally wrote “Adagio for Strings” as the second movement of a String Quartet in 1936. In that same year he arranged it for a string orchestra. According to Alex Ross in *The Rest Is Noise*, when Arturo Toscanini heard Barber singing his own setting of Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” he decided to play more of Barber’s works on his NBC radio broadcasts. One of those was “Adagio for Strings,” which soon became, in the United States, Barber’s most famous work. As Ross puts it, the music still “has not lost its binding power. Whenever the American dream suffers a catastrophic setback, Barber’s Adagio for Strings plays on the radio.”

III THE LANDSCAPE OF OPPORTUNITY

CHOOSE SOMETHING LIKE A STAR

The text is a poem by Robert Frost. The title is clearly addressed to us. But then Frost speaks directly to the star. At line 16, he turns back to us, to what the star doesn’t tell us and what it does by its height and steadfastness. He compares the star to “Keats’ Eremit,” an allusion to John Keats’s poem “Bright Star,” in which Keats calls his star “nature’s patient, sleepless Eremit.” The word means “hermit.” Why would Frost use Keats’s word? If we read Keats’s poem, a love poem, we can see that the poems have similar goals, though Keats’s is more personal. And “eremite” rhymes with “height” in the scheme of Frost’s poem.

Randall Thompson (b. 1899, d. 1984) set this poem as the last of a series called *Frostiana, Seven Country Songs*, commissioned in 1958 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the city of Amherst, Massachusetts.

SURE ON THIS SHINING NIGHT

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) once told an interviewer that for him the purpose of music, of all art, is “to leave us something elegant that enriches our spirit, touches our heart, probes our intellect and improves the human condition.” “Sure on this Shining Night,” I think, fits this definition well. The word used most frequently to describe Lauridsen’s music is “transcendent.” The text here is by James Agee, author of, among other things, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, a moving study—accompanied by the photographs of Walker Evans—of the lives of American tenant farmers during the Great Depression.

WE CAN MEND THE SKY

The sister of composer Jake Runestad (b. 1986) was a middle-school English teacher in Minneapolis, and many of her students were East African immigrants. Some had come with their families from Somalia to escape the civil war there. Runestad, in his score, tells us that “I wanted to help tell their stories through music.” He received “over 100 poems that contain passion, pride, emotion, and vivid stories of the sights and sounds that these young people have experienced.” He built “We Can Mend the Sky” out of “the powerful words of 14-year old Warda Mohamed” and “two Somali proverbs.”

IV THE LANDSCAPE OF FAITH

UNCLOUDED DAY

“Unclothed Day” is the first movement of a three-movement work called *Heavenly Home: Three American Songs*, based on gospel tunes arranged by Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970). According to Kirchner “Unclothed Day” was written by J. K. Alwood. He describes his arrangement: “A straight-forward first verse and chorus are followed by two verses in which traditional bluegrass vocal stylings combine with counterpoint and fugue in a crescendo... that peaks in a roof-raising eight-part chord on the phrase ‘in the city that is made of gold.’” The other two movements, which we don’t get to sing in this concert, are “Angel Band” and “Hallelujah.”

BOUND FOR THE PROMISED LAND

“Bound for the Promised Land” is an American folk hymn arranged by Mack Wilberg (b. 1955), music director of the Tabernacle Choir. An internet search for this hymn lists an Englishman, Samuel Stennet (1717-1775), as the author (of the text?) but the entry concludes with “The hymn that we know today doesn’t sound exactly like the one that Stennett wrote.” Which suggests that over the years the work in the hands and voices of many Americans has become a genuine folk hymn. Mack Wilberg’s arrangement is, like many of the pieces he has done for the Tabernacle Choir, energetic, exciting, and moving.

DEATH SHALL NOT DESTROY MY COMFORT

The Oxford University Press describes this work online: “This is No. 2 of Four American Folk Hymns which draw on the rich folk traditions of New England and rural Southern United States. Mack Wilberg has taken a low-key approach in his arrangements allowing the pure folk flavour to shine through.”

COME THOU FOUNT

This work is Number 4 of Mack Wilberg’s arrangement of *Four American Folk Hymns*. We know that the melody comes from John Wyeth’s *Repository of Sacred Music*, first printed in 1813 and reissued in several subsequent editions. The words were written by Robert Robinson and are included in Wyeth’s *Repository*. But this tune has made its way into several modern hymnals, and it has been assigned the hymn-tune name *Nettleton*, perhaps to honor Asahel Nettleton, an American evangelist who in 1824 collected hymn texts in *Village Hymns for Social Worship*. But the volume of tunes intended to accompany that volume does not contain the tune that bears Nettleton’s name. No one seems to know how the text and the tune were brought together.

Some are puzzled by the line, “Here I raise my Ebenezer. Hither by thy help I’m come.” The Reference is to I Samuel 7:12 where, after the Hebrews have defeated the Philistines, Samuel sets up a rock which he names Ebenezer and says, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” Ebenezer meaning “Rock of Strength.”

Just as we opened our concert with a hymn of Thanksgiving, we end with a hymn of praise, a plea: “Tune my heart to sing thy grace,” and a prayer for strength in spite of our human shortcomings: “Prone to wander, Lord I feel it...” A description that could fit any one of us.

Program Notes by Millard Dunn

CONDUCTOR’S NOTES

What comes to mind when I mention the word “landscape?” It possibly evokes the grandeur of Rockies, the tranquility of the Gulf shore, wind-kissed fields of Indiana corn, or the undulating fencerows of a Kentucky horse farm. Yet, what if we viewed American Landscapes through the ideals we have come to cherish and which we must struggle to retain and reclaim in our present contexts.

The program is organized around three principles — principles that our Constitution guarantees each citizen in the pursuit of “Life, Liberty and Happiness.” The Landscape of Freedom is introduced by the late New Orleans composer of African American spirituals, Moses Hogan. However, rather than a “nod” to this most American of musical genres, the focus is on “The Battle” – a battle to break down the walls of injustice. *Fences* proclaims, “But we forgot somewhere in time, the earth’s not yours, or theirs, or mine; and for children yet to be, there must be no fences.” Langston Hughes’ *To Sit and Dream* is set to a ‘jazz fantasia’ by female black composer Rosephanye Powell. Its focus is the right for everyone not only to dream of ‘vast horizons of the soul,’ but to be set free and helped to realize

them. Operatic singer Gregory Rahming sings the role of Dan-u-el, in Kirk Mechem's choral suite *Songs of the Slave*, a recounting of the still controversial abolitionist, John Brown, and his transport of a slave family to freedom. The section concludes with U2's tribute to MLK followed by an opportunity for reflection in Samuel Barber's iconic *Adagio for Strings*.

The Landscape of Opportunity is shaped by two great American poets and composers. Robert Frost and Randall Thompson remind us that "when at times the mob is swayed to carry praise or blame too far, we may choose something like a star..." James Agee and Morten Lauridsen challenge us to heal hearts all whole through a sense of wonder. Composer Jake Runestad based *We Can Mend the Sky* on a selection from over 100 poems written by East African immigrant students who fled civil wars in their countries. Warda Mohamed's poem concludes with a Somali proverb, "If we come together, we can mend the crack in the sky."

With such a broad and diverse history of faith cultures in our country, it was impossible to give proper voice to all of them in only one section of a program. Consequently, The Landscape of Faith focuses on some early folk hymns of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that became part of the landscape of western pioneer settlement and southern "shaped-note" singing. *Bound for the Promised Land* was intended as a double entendre for our journey heavenward but also for the settling of the American pioneer West.

We welcome you and hope you enjoy these vignettes of our American Landscapes.

John Dickson

ORCHESTRA

VIOLIN 1

Kim Tichenor -
Concertmaster
Cheri Kelly
Sarah Hill
Isabella Christensen
Eska Koester
Marina Fisher

VIOLIN 2

Brittany McWilliams
Sila Darville
Becca Neely
Paola Land

VIOLA

Laura De St-Croix Vivic
Melinda Odle
Michael Hill

CELLO

Wendy Doyle
Ian Schroeder
Rebecca Price
Luke Darville

BASS

Sarah Ransom

TIMPANI/ PERCUSSION:

Michael Launius

LOUISVILLE MASTER CHORALE

SOPRANO

Janie Benjamin
Elisabeth Burmeister
Ashley Cissell
Conra Cowart
Stephanie Hall
Kim Henderson
Catherine Knott
Jan Margerum
Nancy Morris
Sahara Myers
Randy Peters
Lauren Riley
Stephanie Smith
Emily Stewart
Tami Stoecker
Jodi Swanson

ALTO

Bec Feldhaus Adams
Faith Aeilts
Anne-Karrick Deetsch
Barbara Ellis
Jeanne Marie Groene
Julie Nichelson
Lauren Pauley
Miriam Pittenger
Marsha Roberts
Shiela Steinman Wallace
Brenda Weeks
Beck Wills
Judith Youngblood

TENOR

Rob Carlson
J.R. Cannaday
Millard Dunn
Brytner Evangelista
Paul Henderson
Patrick Koopman
Stuart McCloy
Nick Rowan
Jonathan Smith
Claude Wise
Thomas Wobbe

BASS

Louie Bailey
Daniel Blankenship
John R. Hale
Wes Harris
Frederick Klotter
Matthew McGarvey
Allen Montgomery
John O'Neil
Laurence Pittenger
Ben Ragsdell
Gregory Rahming
Hans Sander
William Schauf

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



DEBBIE DIERKS is Louisville Master Chorale's Music Associate. In that role she works with the Artistic Director in the preparation and performance of the season and accompanies the group in rehearsal and in concert. She has a wide and varied background in the Louisville musical world and beyond, including as lecturer, vocal coach and accompanist at the University of Louisville. She has been engaged with Youth Performing Arts School and various professional and semi-professional local music groups, most notably Voces Novae. She has performed with the Choral Arts Society, the former Bach Society, Metropolitan Opera auditions, Governor's School for the Arts and NATS competitions. Professional recitalist and collaborator, Deborah has performed across the US and Europe. She is currently Music Director at

Jeffersontown Christian Church. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and her graduate degree from the University of Louisville.

GUEST CONDUCTOR & SOLOISTS



JOHN H. DICKSON, GUEST CONDUCTOR, is Professor Emeritus and former Director of Choral Studies at Louisiana State University. Recently retired after forty-four years of collegiate teaching, he continues his conducting through workshops, festivals, and as the founding artistic director of Coro Vocati, one of Atlanta's most accomplished professional chamber choirs.

As a conducting pedagogue, he has presented masterclasses before the Association of British Choral Directors, the American Choral Directors Association, the Royal Northern Music Conservatory (Manchester), and the Russian State Music Conservatories of St. Petersburg and Moscow. He has conducted festivals and workshops in England, Wales, Scotland, Finland, France, Italy, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Canada, and throughout the U. S. For three decades his choirs have been featured at conventions of the ACDA, ABCD, Texas Music Educators Association, and the National Collegiate Choral Organization.

A Visiting Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge University, Dr. Dickson sang with Sir David Willcocks and The Bach Choir; a second post-doctoral fellowship allowed him to serve as David Hill's assistant conductor. He is the Founding Director of the Oxbridge C. S. Lewis Choral Institute.



EMILY STEWART, Soprano, serves as choral director at Clarksville Middle & High Schools where she was named the 21-22 Clarksville Community Schools Corporation District Teacher of the Year. She has conducted and directed many concerts and musicals and is the head of both the fine arts and technology departments. She received undergraduate degrees in Choral Music Education and Voice performance and a graduate degree in Choral Music Education from Virginia's Christopher Newport University. She is a proud mom of two children.



GREGORY RAHMING, *Baritone*. His career has spanned more than 25 years of opera, concert and stage performances. He won top prizes in numerous vocal competitions and has returned to Louisville after many years performing on Broadway and in cities across America and Europe. His range of interests spans from performing with Kentucky Opera to leading a group of young men in “Sounds of Motown.” In addition to performing, he serves Louisville’s Arts Community as a vocal instructor, mentor and musical director.



NICK ROWAN – *Tenor*, is a Louisville native who graduated from the Youth Performing Arts School’s Vocal Music program at DuPont Manual High School and then received his degree in Choral Music Education from the University of Kentucky. He has sung in a number of choral groups, from church choirs to the acoUstiKats, UK’s male a cappella group, and is now a member of the Louisville Master Chorale. He is also currently a Choral Scholar at the Highland Baptist Church.



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Barbara Sandford & Greg Kuhns

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Joe Chiles

Barbara Collins

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Marsha & Harvey Roberts

Jan & Konrad Margerum

Mary Means

Julie Nichelson

Donna Peak

Caroline & A. W. Rosenthal

Martha & Michael Richardson

Clayton Rogers

Mary & Ben Sanders

Judith Sanderson

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Richard Wayne Stephan

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Martha Watson

Mark Webster

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