

UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS CHAMBER CHOIR

KMEA CONCERT

FEBRUARY 22, 2024

PROGRAM NOTES

Senzeni Na? – arr. Leon Starker-- is a South African anti-apartheid folksong which is commonly sung at funerals, public demonstrations and churches. The influence and popularity of *Senzeni na* in South Africa has been compared to the meaning and importance that the American protest song *We Shall Overcome* has had in the United States.

The original language of the song is Xhosa, which is spoken by 10 million people as a first language and by another 10 million people as a second language. Part of the Nguni group of languages, Xhosa is one of the official languages of South Africa and Zimbabwe

*What have we done (to deserve this strife)?
We shall meet again in heaven.*

Gropen – arr. Gjermund Larsen

(From the score) Gropen is a traditional dancing tune after the fiddler Asbjørn Indahl (1912-1982). The title can be translated as “the dark deep” which refers to the low pitch of the fiddle in the first part of the piece.

“Trailing” – a style of Norwegian folk singing that uses improvised vocal syllables instead of words – is inspired by formulas in fiddle playing.

Diu, diu, deng, is a Taiwanese folksong arranged by Chinese-American composer Chen Yi. The work was commissioned for *Chanticleer* and published in 1998.

*Going up to the tunnel in the mountain, the water in the cave is dropping down.
Going up to the tea mountain, enjoy looking at the tea-picking girls.*

Dessus le marché d’Arras

Orlande de Lassus, known also as Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594) was a towering figure in European Renaissance vocal music. Though Lasso was a Franco-Flemish individual, he served as *maestro di cappella* at the Bavarian court in Munich for 38 years, where his work achieved international notoriety. A prolific composer, Lasso wrote many motets, almost 60 masses, hymns, canticles (over 100 settings of the Magnificat), and many secular works in several languages, including about 150 chansons.

Lasso’s *Dessus le marché d’Arras*, a chanson for six voices based on the tune of a popular song, was published in Paris in 1584. Arras was a busy marketplace, and though the music clearly illustrates the hustle and bustle of the place, it leaves room for some flirting romance.

*Near the marketplace in Arras,
mireli, mirela, bon bas, mireli, mirela, bon bas,
I met a Spaniard, sentin, senta, sur la bon bas.
He said to me, “Girl, listen,”*

*mireli, mirela, bon bas, mireli, mirela, bon bas,
“Gold and silver I will give to you,”
sentin, senta, sur la bon bas. sentin, senta, sur la bon bas.*

Jauchzet dem Herren, SWV 36 (Rejoice in the Lord, all ye lands), part of the well-known *Psalmen Davids*, is a setting of Psalm 100 by the great German composer Heinrich Schütz, arguably the most important German composer before Johann Sebastian Bach. Schütz is at his finest here, particularly using the Venetian polychoral style he studied with Giovanni Gabrieli.

*Shout for joy to the Lord, all the world
Serve the Lord with gladness;
Come before His presence with rejoicing.
Know that the Lord is God.
It is He who made us and not we ourselves;
We are His people, the sheep of His pasture.
Enter His gates with thanksgiving
And into His courts with praise;
Give thanks to Him, give praise to His name.
For the Lord is good,
And His mercy is everlasting
And His Truth endures for ever and ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and every shall be,
World without end. Amen.*

I himmelen (In Heaven's Hall), based on a Swedish folk chorale from Shattungbyn is presented here in a setting by Swedish composer Karin Rehnkvist. The work calls for four "kulning" soloists. Kulning is an archaic style of singing/calling, still used in Swedish folk music, traditionally employed outdoors, to call for animals or to communicate with other people over long distances.

*In heaven's hall where God the Lord resides
What utter joy what pleasure there where happiness abides
And here we, now face to face where God eternal fills the space,
The Lord of Hosts.*

*In heaven's hall what crystal purity
Not even the sun in clarity can shine as bright as He,
Who is the sun that never sets, it never even darkened gets
He is the Lord of Hosts.*

*In heaven's hall the blessed gather there.
And there the saints and angel wear a sheen and haloed hair!
My soul, your soul shall ever be enriched for all eternity
By God, the Lord of Hosts*

I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes – Adolphus Hailstork

Born in 1941, Dr. Adolphus Hailstork is a celebrated American composer with studies at Howard University, the Manhattan School of Music, and Michigan State University. He also attended the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France, where we was a student of the legendary Nadia Boulanger.

I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes, written in memory of the great composer and arranger Undine Smith Moore, is a cantata for tenor solo, SATB chorus, and orchestra published in 1997. The work consists of three movements, which are settings of psalms 121, 13, and 23. Only the first movement is presented tonight.

*I will lift up mine eyes to the hills,
From whence cometh my help?*

*My help cometh surely from the Lord,
Maker of heaven and earth.*

*He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber nor sleep.*

*The sun will not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by nigh.*

*The Lord shall preserve thee from evil:
The Lord shall preserve thy soul!*

She Walks in Beauty

Composer Toby Hession was only 20 years old in 2017 when he won the inaugural VCM foundation Composition Competition with *She Walks in Beauty* with lyrics by Lord Byron (1788-1824). Hession sets Byron's arguably most famous poem with an extremely rich harmonic style, full of colors, lush, expressive lines, and a sense of expansiveness. Reports indicate that Byron was inspired to write this poem after meeting Mrs. Anne Beatrix Willmot and being struck by her unusual beauty. This unique poem has been set by many composers, including Roger Quilter, Gerald Finzi, Sally Whitwell, and Z. Randall Stroope, among others.

*She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heav'n to gaudy day denies.*

*One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace*

*Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.*

*And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent.
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent.
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!*

Ojos azules (Blue Eyes)

Argentinian choral conductor Miguel Pesce crafts a wonderful arrangement of *Ojos azules*, a traditional melody from Perú, using Andean instruments. The use of “sikus” (a type of panflute) and a “caja” (a small percussion instrument, mostly used for “Huaynos” and “Bagualas”) give this arrangement a unique and authentic flavor. The work is structured in a succession of scenes: The general theme is a celebration in a street fair, starting with a convocation, a call to participants, followed by ever increasing animated scenes. The *sikus* enter representing three sorcerers who hypnotically grab the attention of the audience. The text, however, is a non-corresponding love story, where the speaker asks the eyes of the presumed lover not to cry except only when they leave.

*Blue eyes do not cry and do not fall in love.
You will cry when I leave, when there is no more remedy.
You swore to love me for life!
It has not been two, three days, and you now leave me.
I leave you now, and I leave my portrait on your breast.
Treat it with love, because it is mine.*

Rotaļa (Round Dance) – Part of *Neslēgtais gredzens (The Unclosed Ring)* and written by Juris Karlsons in 1982, *Rotaļa* is a setting of a poem by Janis Rainis (1865-1929), widely considered as Latvia’s greatest poet. This fast-paced, demanding work, full of rapid melodic turns, spoken parts, and many clusters, is also a song-and-dance game, with singers and dancers form in a circle taking turns moving ...*to the middle!* This song is commonly used to celebrate the arrival of springtime, after the long cold Latvian winter.

*Vidu! To the middle!
One came, the other went,
One lets go, another waves, vidu!
The outstretched hand is not yet grabbed,
You already swing along in a circle, vidu!
Freely, freely the days spin,
Hither, thither, part and join your hands,
Further joining, further swaying, vidu!
Freely, freely swirl around!*