

Cascadian Chorale

“In Memoriam”

March 24 & 25, 2012

- Komm, süßer Tod (1736) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)
- I shall not care (2005) Christopher Lee Fraley (b.1967)
World premiere performance
- The silver swan (1612) Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)
- Lay a garland (1840) Robert Lucas Pearsall (1795–1856)
- Three Shakespeare Songs (1951) Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)
1. Full fathom five
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- Versa est in luctum (1598) Alonso Lobo (1555–1617)
- Requiem aeternam (2001) Peter Winkler (b.1943)
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Cascadian Chorale

Gary D. Cannon, conductor

Komm, süßer Tod, BWV 478, published in *Musikalisches Gesangbuch* (1736)
harmonized by **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685–1750), realized by Gary D. Cannon

Today, Johann Sebastian Bach is widely hailed as one history's greatest musicians. Yet to his contemporaries, he was not at all known outside his native Germany. Even his own countrymen perceived Bach mostly as an organist and educator in the provincial town of Leipzig. As a composer, he was considered second-rate, too entranced by chromatic harmony and complex counterpoint to be a major voice. How times have changed.

Very few of Bach's compositions were published during his lifetime. Nearly all such works were for keyboard instruments, the only exceptions being a cantata, a trio sonata, and a selection of sacred songs. These latter were published by Georg Christian Schemelli (c.1676–1762) in early 1736. Schemelli, one of whose sons had recently studied under Bach, was cantor at Zeitz, a town thirty miles south of Leipzig and hometown of Bach's wife, Anna Magdalena. Schemelli's publication, the *Musikalisches Gesangbuch* (or *Musical Songbook*), was essentially a hymnal comprised of sixty-nine Lutheran chorales. The chorale was a genre that had occupied much of Bach's attention at the time; note, for example, the prominence of chorale settings in the contemporaneous *St. Matthew Passion*, which he premiered that Easter. To each of the published melodies, Bach also supplied a bass line and harmonic indications for an organist, called figured bass. Most of the *Gesangbuch* tunes predated Bach, but *Komm, süßer Tod* is believed to have been composed by the great master. For our performance, the conductor has followed Bach's figured bass to format the work for four-part chorus.

Komm, süßer Tod, komm sel'ge Ruh'!
Komm und führe mich in Friede,
weil ich der Welt bin müde.
Ach, komm, ich wart' auf dich,
komm bald und führe mich,
drück' mir die Augen zu.
Komm, sel'ge Ruh'!

Come, sweeter death; come, blessed rest!
Come and lead me to peace,
for I of the world am weary.
Ah, come, I wait for you,
come soon and lead me,
close my eyes up.
Come, blessed rest!

I shall not care, F.139 (2005)

by **Christopher Lee Fraley** (born 1967)

Raised near Philadelphia, Chris Fraley grew up writing “hundreds of songs” for the band in which he played guitar. He went on to study computer engineering and music composition at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He joined the fledgling staff of Microsoft in 1989, working as a software code developer. Some of you may remember the delightful computer game *Rodent’s Revenge*, one of Fraley’s creations for Microsoft. He found many fellow musicians at the company, former professionals and even ongoing freelancers, and thus never neglected his love for music. After nine years as a self-professed “code monkey,” Fraley left Microsoft to start a new technology firm with his brother in Pittsburgh. He eventually returned to Seattle, continuing his studies with composer Peter Wolf. Until about six years ago, he focused his musical efforts on orchestral and chamber music, but has recently embraced the choral milieu with vigor. This season, he serves as Cascadian Chorale’s Composer-in-Residence.

Fraley imbues his compositions with formal structure, motivic unity, and harmonic consistency. His setting of Sara Teasdale’s verse, from the best-selling collection that established her as one of America’s leading poets, begins with unison women’s voices, as if Teasdale herself were singing the lyric. They sing only the first six lines, which are then repeated by the full chorus in a gentle and harmonious setting. Only then does Fraley move to the poem’s dramatic final couplet, assigning pointedly dissonant harmonies.

When I am dead and over me bright April
 Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Tho’ you should lean above me broken-hearted,
 I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
 When rain bends down the bough.
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
 Than you are now.

—Sara Teasdale (1884–1933), published in *Rivers to the Sea* (1915)

The silver swan, published in *The First Set of Madrigals and Motets* (1612)
by **Orlando Gibbons** (1583–1625)

Orlando Gibbons began his career as a boy chorister at King's College, Cambridge, under the tutelage of his elder brother. He was quickly chosen in 1603 to work in King James I's private chapel, the Chapel Royal. Gibbons therefore became affiliated with the nobility, and his single collection of madrigals is dedicated to Sir Christopher Hatton II, heir of Queen Elizabeth I's trusted Lord Chancellor. While his writings for the virginal (a precursor to the harpsichord) are the foremost keyboard music of the era, he is today remembered mostly for his church anthems. But at least one of those secular madrigals has remained a staple of the repertoire: the brief but touching *The silver swan*. In it, each line of text is given a unique musical phrase, distributed in quick succession among all five voices.

In his later life, Gibbons accumulated four official posts as keyboardist in the royal court: organist of the Chapel Royal, keyboardist in the entourage of the crown prince Charles, virginalist of the king's private residence, and organist at Westminster Abbey. After William Byrd, Gibbons was the most renowned musician in England. Gibbons suddenly collapsed in 1625 while the Chapel Royal accompanied the king on a journey to Canterbury to greet the new queen, Henrietta Maria, from Paris. He died six days later.

The silver swan, who living had no note,
when death approached unlocked her silent throat;
leaning her breast against the reedy shore,
thus sung her first and last, and sung no more:
Farewell, all joys; O death, come close mine eyes;
more geese than swans now live, more fools than wise.

Lay a garland (1840)

by **Robert Lucas Pearsall** (1795–1856)

Between the death of Henry Purcell in 1695 and the premiere of Edward Elgar's *Enigma Variations* in 1899, English music was alleged to have suffered for lack of original inspiration. Thanks to the compact disc generation, an extensive exploration of Britain's home-grown musical traditions has slowly put to rest such a cursory assessment. Certainly the music of Robert Lucas Pearsall is strong evidence of a rich and thriving musical culture. Pearsall was the only surviving son of a family grown wealthy from the steel industry at Bristol, a port city in the west of England. He trained as a lawyer, but ill health caused him to live much of his life in Bavaria and Switzerland. There he indulged in his two great loves: musical composition and the collection of antiquities.

Pearsall maintained contacts with Bristol, and was a founding member of the Bristol Madrigal Society in 1837. Thus there was a natural outlet for his madrigals and partsongs. He was particularly enamored of the music of his English Renaissance forebears, especially Thomas Morley. However, his larger-scale madrigals, such as *Lay a garland*, illustrate a deeper understanding of nineteenth-century continental trends. It is not only more ambitious than most contemporaneous European partsongs, being written fluidly and elegantly in eight parts, but also exudes fine harmonic and melodic craftsmanship. Note, for example, the careful handling of dissonance as each part enters to "Maidens, willow branches wear." The text is adapted from a popular seventeenth-century play which may not live up to Shakespearean standards, but did at least yield this nineteenth-century musical gem.

Lay a garland on her hearse of dismal yew;
maidens, willow branches wear; say she died true,
her love was false, but she was firm.
Upon her buried body lie lightly, thou gentle earth.

—Francis Beaumont (1584–1616) and John Fletcher (1579–1625),
from the play *The Maid's Tragedy* (1619)

Three Shakespeare Songs (1951)

by **Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872–1958)

Upon the death of Sir Edward Elgar in 1934, Ralph Vaughan Williams became English music's unofficial Grand Old Man. One might expect that he would have settled into complacency, focusing his compositions into the neo-Renaissance and neo-folksong styles with which he had found great success. Instead, Vaughan Williams chose just the opposite route. His works from the 1930s, such as the ballet *Job* (1930), the one-act opera *Riders to the Sea* (1932), the Fourth Symphony (1934), and the choral cantata *Dona Nobis Pacem* (1936), show a more dissonant harmonic palette. By the late 1940s, he also became enamored of unusual instrumental sonorities, as illustrated in his score to the film *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) and the Eighth and Ninth Symphonies (1956 and 1958 respectively). This exploration of unusual harmonic twists and unorthodox sonorities also influenced his late choral works.

In early 1951, the composer and administrator Armstrong Gibbs had asked Vaughan Williams for a new work that would be the centerpiece of a choral competition under the auspices of the British Federation of Music Festivals to be held on June 23rd. Vaughan Williams hesitated, preferring that competitions focus on the standard repertoire. However, in late April, Vaughan Williams's long-invalid wife, Adeline, died. Within weeks, Gibbs received a thick envelope containing a manuscript with a simple inscription: "Dear Armstrong. Here are three Shakespeare settings. Do what you like with them... Yours ever R.V.W." The cycle, itself destined to become standard choral repertoire, is dedicated to Gibbs.

After Adeline's death, Vaughan Williams did not cancel his appointments, but threw himself even more deeply into his work. The first two of these *Three Shakespeare Songs* make it clear, however, that Adeline remained poignantly in his thoughts. Both are settings from *The Tempest*. The first text is sung by the spirit Ariel to Ferdinand, who believes his father to have been drowned. Vaughan Williams's harmonic explorations bear fruit as the sopranos' opening sonority—an F major triad with an interloping G—is soon interrupted by the tenors' dissonant but sonorous D-flat. The basses are given the bulk of the text as the other voices intone an imaginary underwater funeral knell. The second text is extracted from a speech by the elderly magician Prospero. A few years prior, Vaughan Williams had cited these final lines as befitting the bleak closing pages of his Sixth Symphony (1947), with its eerie juxtaposition of E minor and E-flat major. He uses a similarly ambiguous harmonic color here, in rich eight-part chords.

1. Full fathom five

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Ding-dong.
Hark! now I hear them, – Ding-dong, bell.

2. The cloud-capp'd towers

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself
Yea, all which it inherit shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind: we are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

— William Shakespeare (1564–1616), from the play *The Tempest* (?1611)

Komm, Jesu, komm, BWV 229 (possibly first performed in 1731/2)
by **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685–1750)

In 1695, Johann Schelle, cantor of the Thomasschule in Leipzig, composed a motet for the funeral of Jakob Thomasius, noted philosopher and rector of the Thomasschule. The text was an extended, eleven-verse poem by local academic Paul Thymich. Schelle's music is straightforwardly homophonic (all voices moving simultaneously), and, all in all, nothing extraordinary. However, some thirty-five years later, Schelle's eventual successor, Johann Sebastian Bach, embraced the first and final verses of Thymich's poem to create one of his most personal works.

Among Bach's duties as cantor of the Thomasschule and director of music for the city of Leipzig was the composition of music for special civic occasions, such as the funerals of civic leaders. While there is no evidence of the precise occasion for which Bach composed his setting of Thymich's *Komm, Jesu, komm*, the text and its history indicate that it was probably for one such funereal service. This was Bach's only motet not based on a Biblical text or a traditional chorale. It survives to us today thanks to a single copy made by a student, Christopher Nichelmann, who left the Thomasschule in 1731 or 1732, thereby providing a latest possible date for the work's composition.

On such special occasions, Bach had greater resources at his disposal than for a usual Sunday service. Hence his motets are mostly in eight parts, rather than the standard four of his cantatas. They were generally performed with continuo (a keyboard such as organ or harpsichord and a small selection of string and wind instruments), but today it is commonplace to present them unaccompanied. In *Komm, Jesu, komm*, Bach divides the eight voices into two equal choirs. Much of the work's interest is in how he treats these two choirs: at turns they combine, separate, echo, or contrast.

In the first verse of the text, Bach treats each line separately. After a hesitant stammer of "Komm" ("come"), he immediately employs one of the unifying features of the entire motet: a series of interlocking suspensions, in which one voice will sustain a pitch from the previous chord, only belatedly falling into a pitch that fits in the new chord. Bach could hardly have thought of a more apt way to depict how weary ("müde") life has become. The bitter path of life ("der saure Weg") is dramatically and dissonantly depicted in a sudden drop of a diminished seventh. For the final two lines of this stanza, the meter shifts to a lilting 6/8, a dancing depiction of the joy that Christ supplies as the right path ("der rechte Weg"). Suspensions abound as Bach tosses the music back and forth between the two choirs.

Bach's setting of the second stanza is more condensed, as the two choirs combine forces in a chorale. It is titled "Aria", here referring to a contemporary alternate definition of that term as a strophic, homophonic choral work in which the sopranos maintain the melody. Bach generally concluded his larger-scale cantatas with chorales, but few are so harmonically and contrapuntally complex. Once again Bach embellishes the word "Weg" ("path"), extending the text's final line with a joyful yet subdued optimism in an eternal rest.

Komm, Jesu, komm, mein Leib ist müde,
die Kraft verschwind't je mehr und mehr,
ich sehne mich nach deinem Friede;
der saure Weg wird mir zu schwer!
Komm, komm, ich will mich dir ergeben,
du bist der rechte Weg,
die Wahrheit und das Leben.

Drauf schließ ich mich in deine Hände
und sage, Welt, zu guter Nacht!
eilt gleich mein Lebenslauf zu Ende,
ist doch der Geist wohl angebracht.
Er soll bei seinem Schöpfer schweben,
weil Jesus ist und bleibt
der wahre Weg zum Leben.

Come, Jesus, come; my body is weary,
my strength disappears more and more,
I yearn for your peace;
the bitter path is becoming, to me, too difficult!
Come, come, I want to submit myself to you,
you are the right path,
the truth and the life.

Thus I entrust myself into your hands
and say: World, good night!
Hurries now my life to its end,
yet is the soul well prepared.
It shall, with its creator, hover,
for Jesus is and remains
the true path to life.

— Paul Thymich (1656–1694), published in *Wagnerisches Gesangbuch* (1697)

Versa est in luctum (1598), published in *Liber primus missarum* (1602)
by **Alonso Lobo** (1555–1617)

When Christopher Columbus embarked on his famed journey in 1492, Spain was already the reigning superpower of the Atlantic. Soon after Columbus's return, the crown decreed that all trade to or from the Spanish Americas had to pass through the southern port of Seville. Merchants flocked there from throughout Europe, hoping for a small part of the vast riches to be found in distant lands. Seville soon completed construction of what was then the world's largest cathedral, and it remains third-largest even today. The building's famously long nave is embossed abundantly with gold, as befitting the official seat reigning over the ecclesiastical dioceses of the New World. Columbus himself was buried in the Seville Cathedral in 1506. Clearly here was one of the most prominent cities in Europe.

Seville was a central focus in the life of Alonso Lobo, born at the town of Osuna, fifty miles east. At age 11, he became a choirboy at the cathedral, where musical life was dominated by Francisco Guerrero, the most prominent musician in Spain. Lobo then gained a law degree at his hometown's university, but in 1591 returned to Seville as Guerrero's assistant. Between 1593 and 1604 Lobo served as *maestro di capilla* at the cathedral in Toledo, the infamous center of the ongoing Inquisition and Seville's only rival in the grandeur of its church music. He spent the remainder of his life as Guerrero's successor in Seville, universally respected as the equal of any composer in Spain.

Lobo's music was widely performed well into the eighteenth century, especially in the Spanish Americas, but then fell into obscurity. Only in the last two decades has Lobo's reputation begun to rise, with the six-voice *Versa est in luctum* leading the way. This motet appears in Lobo's only publication during his lifetime, a collection of six masses and seven motets. The text to *Versa est in luctum* is not part of the standard Catholic liturgy, but is affiliated with services for the dead. Lobo composed his setting in 1598, during his period in Toledo, upon the death of King Philip II. It is a fine example of Lobo's compositional style, with smooth and beautiful phrases passed among the voices in a style known as imitative counterpoint.

Versa est in luctum cithara mea,
et organum in vocem flentium.
Parce mihi, Domine, nihil enim sunt dies mei.

Turned to mourning is my harp,
and my organ to the voice of weeping.
Spare me, Lord, for as nothing are my days.

Requiem aeternam (2001)

by **Peter Winkler** (born 1943)

Composer Peter Winkler has close connections with New York City: for several years he has lived on Long Island. Winkler studied composition at Princeton and Harvard in the 1960s, but found particular passion for Motown and the Beatles, a zeal which led him to become a founding member of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. He teaches popular music—together with composition and music theory—at Stony Brook University. His compositions often incorporate pop elements, including works for musical theater, but he also composes more traditional classical music, such as the choral *Requiem aeternam*, begun on September 12, 2001.

Winkler writes: “My first response to the tragedy of September 11, 2001, was the desire to pray for the souls of the victims. The prayer came to me in musical form: the sound of *a cappella* voices singing words from the beginning of the Latin Requiem Mass. The prayer is at first low and tentative, then increasingly impassioned. Silences are very important to the idea of the music. As the piece goes on, the role of the silences shifts from punctuation to interruption, as though the impulse to pray were being choked off.”

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Exaudi orationem meum.
Ad te omnis caro veniet.

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

Rest eternal grant to them, Lord,
and light perpetual shine on them.
Hear my prayer.
To you all flesh will come.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

— from the Roman Catholic Liturgy of the Dead

Peace, night, sleep (2011)

by **John Muehleisen** (born 1955)

John Muehleisen is among the most prominent voices in Seattle's choral world, with frequent performances locally and nationally. He studied music at California State University in Sacramento, the University of Washington, and Indiana University. Until his recent retirement to focus on music, he worked at Microsoft. He has been Composer-in-Residence for Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble, one of the area's leading choirs, since 1996, and also served in that capacity for the final season (2003–4) of the famed Dale Warland Singers in Minneapolis. Muehleisen's most recent project was his first concert-length work, *Pietà*, premiered earlier this month by Choral Arts in Seattle.

Peace, night, sleep was commissioned by the Concert Choir of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for a concert of Pacific Northwest music last April. The final two lines of the poem are given a particularly unique setting, as the choir repeats melodic ideas from earlier in the work in a mystical dissolving into a dream state. As the composer writes: "These musical and textual fragments are juxtaposed and overlaid, sometimes out of sequence compared with the original poem, much in the same way that images and events might appear in seemingly random combinations in our own dreams. Ultimately, the piece ends with a [...]six-note chord that hangs in the air, simultaneously unresolved and at rest."

In March 2011, Muehleisen found himself at the Chicago Hilton for the national conference of the American Choral Directors Association. While engaged in energetic discussions with his colleagues, he observed someone point to a television monitor in the lounge: "Look, look what's happening in Japan!" All conversation ceased as attention poured to news coverage of the devastating 9.0 earthquake and ensuing tsunami. Just days prior, he had completed *Peace, night, sleep*, and he felt inspired to dedicate the work to the victims and survivors of that catastrophe: "that their peaceful lives might be restored to them once more and that those who are grieving the loss of home and of loved ones might somehow find a sense of peace and begin healing from this tragedy. My hope is that the peaceful nature of Sandburg's poem and of my own musical setting might be an antidote to the horror and pain inflicted by this natural disaster."

"You shall have peace with night and sleep.
It was written in the creep of the mist,
In the open doors of night horizons.
Peace, night, sleep, all go together.
In the forgetting of the frogs and the sun,
In the losing of the grackle's* off cry
And the call of the bird whose name is gone—
You shall have peace; the mist creeps, the doors open.
Let night, let sleep, have their way."

—Carl Sandburg (1878–1967)

* grackle = a small bird native to the eastern United States, similar to a starling

Nunc dimittis (2011)

by **Joshua Haberman** (born 1982)

Josh Haberman is the third composer in the present program who has dedicated much of his life to Seattle's technology industry. However, unlike former Microsoft employees Chris Fraley and John Muehleisen, Haberman currently works for Google. (Our composer should not be confused with the double-n'd Joshua Habermann, the prominent conductor of the Santa Fe Desert Chorale and Dallas Symphony Chorus.) Haberman sings countertenor in three of the Seattle area's prominent early-music choirs, The Tudor Choir, Canonici: Consort of Voices, and The Byrd Ensemble.

Haberman's love of early music is evident in his recent eight-voice setting of one of the prominent texts of Anglican worship, the *Nunc dimittis*. (Though Anglican worship requires the text to be sung in English, it is still familiarly known by its Latin title.) The Biblical account of this text centers on the figure of Simeon, an elderly temple worker in Jerusalem who had been promised by God that he would see the savior before dying. When Jesus's parents presented their newborn to the temple, Simeon prophesied that this was the promised savior. Haberman's setting begins with the gentleness of one weary with old age, but grows impassioned for the prophecy itself. As befits Anglican practice, the work concludes with a doxology ("Glory be to the Father..."), to which Haberman assigns music that is motivically linked to Simeon's canticle.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared
before the face of all people, to be a light to enlighten the gentiles
and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

— Luke 2:29–32, King James Version of the Bible

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Faire is the heaven (1923)

by **Sir William Henry Harris (1883–1973)**

At the age of fourteen, William Harris was appointed assistant organist at St. David's Cathedral in western Wales. He was already a noted performer upon entering the Royal College of Music in 1899. He held various positions in London, followed by a succession of ever more prestigious posts as organist and choirmaster at Lichfield Cathedral (1911), New College, Oxford (1919), and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (1929). He finally settled in 1933 at St. George's Chapel, the private royal chapel at Windsor Castle. In the latter post he gave the future Queen Elizabeth II weekly music lessons; it is a sign of his closeness to the royal family that she awarded him the Royal Victorian Order, a special knighthood in honor of services to the crown, in the year after her coronation. Concurrent to these church jobs, he taught at the Royal College of Music (1921–53) and became director of musical studies at the Royal School of Church Music in 1956. He retired from the RSCM and St. George's in 1961, one of the most revered figures in English church music.

Today Harris is best remembered for two double-choir motets: *Faire is the heaven* (1925) and *Bring us, O Lord God* (1959). These are very much in the tradition of music of Sir Hubert Parry, who presided at the RCM when Harris was a student. The opening word in *Faire is the heaven* is repeated (in a manner similar to Bach in *Komm, Jesu, komm*), imbuing the anthem immediately with a sense of subdued awe in the unusual key of D-flat major. The two four-part choirs are mostly treated antiphonally, each group responding to music sung by the other, as Harris reserves the full power of eight voices for moments that are either especially dramatic (as at "fiery light" and "each other far excelling") or peacefully sacrosanct ("God's own person", "endless perfectness"). The shifting harmonic centers of *Faire is the heaven* are akin to a travelogue through the Christian heaven: cherubim are a bright A major, archangels a vibrant C major, but "God's own person" returns to the becalmed D-flat major, clearly Harris's chosen key for perfection itself.

Faire is the heav'n where happy soules have place.
In full enjoyment of felicitie;
Whence they doe still behold the glorious face
Of the Divine Eternall Majestie;

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins
Which all with golden wings are overdight.*
And those eternall burning Seraphins
Which from their faces dart out fiery light;
Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright,
Be th' Angels and Archangels which attend
On God's owne Person without rest or end.

These then in faire each other farre excelling,
As to the Highest they approach more neare.
Yet is the Highest farre beyond all telling
Fairer than all the rest which there appear,
Though all their beauties joynd together were;
How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse
The image of such endless perfectnesse?

— Edmund Spenser (c.1552–1599), from *A Hymne of Heavenly Beautie* (1596)

* overdight = covered over