

 CASCADIAN
CHORALE

Conducted by Dr. Gary D. Cannon

Solstice and Dawn

Saturday, December 7, 2024

7:30 PM

Holy Cross Episcopal Church
11526 162nd Ave NE
Redmond, WA

Sunday, December 8, 2024

3:00 PM

Congregational Church on
Mercer Island
4545 Island Crest Way
Mercer Island, WA

The Cascadian Chorale

Sopranos

Cravixtha Acheson
Frances Acheson
Holly Allin
Daria Barteneva
Debra DeFotis
Heather Irwin*
Marilyn McAdoo
Genie Middaugh
Grete Norquist
Krista Petrova
Jules Phan
Tessa Ravagni
Jenifer Rees
Billie Shung
Rachel Spence
Elaine Tsang
Judy Williams
Cami Woodruff

Altos

Annie Doubleday
Christine Dunbar
Gail Erickson
Miriam Estrada-Echegaray
Carol Fielding
Dawn Fosse Cook
Alecia Hawthorne-Heyel*
Ann Marten
Tara O'Brien Pride
Jacquelin Remaley
Debbie Roberts
Nikki Schilling
Pamela Silimperi

Tenors

Brandon Higa
Dustin Kaspar
Brian Matthewson*
Özer Özkaraoğlu
Fred Williams

Basses

Alazel Acheson
Ken Black
Ben Grover
Jeremy Kings
David Nichols
Glenn Nielsen
Trevor Tsang
Jim Whitehead
Doug Wyatt*

* *Section leader*

Artistic Staff

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Ingrid Verhulsdonk, *Pianist*

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Ushers for these performances

Jeremy Lanum, Jason Lewis, Joann Wilson, Dan Wilson,
Wendy Woolery, Emily Pontén-May, and Loren Pontén.

Cascadian Chorale thanks our volunteers who welcome our audience and make it possible for us to make music—we couldn't do it without you! A special thanks to Opus 7 for their volunteer ushers.

Program notes by Gary D. Cannon. | Program produced by Doug Wyatt. | Cover design by Cami Woodruff.

SOLSTICE AND DAWN

- O Radiant Dawn (2007).....James MacMillan (b. 1959)
- Winter Solstice (2024)Sheila Bristow (b. 1969)
premiere performances of this version
commissioned by Cascadian Chorale
- Northern Lights (2008).....Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
- I Wonder as I Wander (1994)..... arr. Steve Pilkington (b. 1956)
soloist: Cami Woodruff
- I Have Loved the Stars (2014) Anne M. Guzzo (b. 1968)
- A Winter Ride (2012).....John W. Ward (b. 1953)
- Sleep (2000)..... Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

∞ intermission ∞

- Night of Silence (2021) Naomi LaViolette
- Noël Huron (2024).....arr. Jeremy Kings (b. 1987)
premiere performances
- In the stillness (2007) Sally Beamish (b. 1956)
- Blow, blow, thou winter wind (1973) John Rutter (b. 1945)
- Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening (2019) Andrew Jacobson (b. 1984)
- Winter Solstice (2022) Naomi LaViolette
- The Unexpected Early Hour (2021) Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

Cascadian Chorale
Ingrid Verhulsdonk, *piano*
Gary D. Cannon, *conductor*

O Radiant Dawn (2007)

by **James MacMillan** (born 1959)

Most of today's "Big Name" composers focus their efforts on orchestral music, opera, chamber music, and the like. Choral music is regrettably often the domain of specialists. James MacMillan is one of very few "Big Names" who have made choral music an integral part of their output. His large-scale *Cantos sagrados* (1989) and *Seven Last Words from the Cross* (1993) were early masterpieces; the more recent *Tenebræ Responsories* (2006), *St. John Passion* (2008), and choral Fifth Symphony (2018) have likewise gained attention.

Since his youth MacMillan has been devoutly Catholic: in fact, he is a lay Dominican. Amid his busy schedule composing and conducting for the world's most prestigious orchestras, he still finds time to direct the amateur choir at St. Columba's Church, Maryhill, in a working-class neighborhood of Glasgow, Scotland. The Chamber Choir of nearby Strathclyde University also makes occasional appearances at St. Columba's. For these two ensembles MacMillan has composed a series of *Strathclyde Motets* to be sung during communion on Sundays and feast days. They vary in difficulty and mood. *O Radiant Dawn* is one of the simplest in construction but darkest in color. The text is a translation of *O oriens, splendor lucis æternæ*, one of the famed "O Antiphons" sung in the seven days before Christmas. The harmonies are spare, even severe, as befits an appeal for the coming dawn or the imminent birth of Christ.

O Radiant Dawn, Splendor of eternal Light, Sun of Justice:
come, shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death.

Isaiah had prophesied, "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone."

O Radiant Dawn ... Amen.

Gary D. Cannon, Artistic Director



Dr. Gary D. Cannon is one of Seattle's most versatile choral personalities, active as conductor, singer, and musicologist. Since 2008 he is Artistic Director of Cascadian Chorale and of the 100-voice Vashon Island Chorale. In 2016 he founded the Emerald Ensemble, a professional chamber choir. At the invitation of the Early Music Guild, he founded and directed a Renaissance choir, *Sine Nomine* (2008–15). He has conducted for Vashon Opera three times, and has also directed Anna's Bay Chamber Choir, Choral Arts, Earth Day Singers, Kirkland Choral Society, and the Northwest Mahler Festival.

As a tenor soloist, he has appeared with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Philharmonic, and the Auburn, Eastside, Rainier, and Sammamish Symphony Orchestras, as well as many Seattle-area choirs. He lectures for Seattle Symphony and provides program notes for choirs across the country. His independent musicological research has a special emphasis on the music of William Walton. A California native, Dr. Cannon holds degrees from the University of California at Davis and the University of Washington.

Ingrid Verhulsdonk, Pianist



Very active as a freelance accompanist in the area, Ingrid Verhulsdonk became the Cascadian Chorale's staff pianist in 2011. She is also principal organist at Sacred Heart Church in Bellevue and accompanist for The Market Street Singers of Ballard. She is on staff at the University of Washington drama department, and has been a regular accompanist with Northwest Opera In Schools, Etcetera (NOISE) and Cornish College of the Arts.

Ingrid has been the recipient of numerous awards and scholarships. She has performed as a soloist with the University of Hawaii Symphony Orchestra as winner of the 2001 student concerto competition, and was a finalist in the Ladies Musical Club competition.

Ingrid holds degrees in piano performance from the University of Washington and the University of Hawaii. She also thoroughly enjoys teaching, and operates a small piano studio in the area.

Winter Solstice (2024)

by **Sheila Bristow** (born 1969)

premiere performances of this version

I first met Sheila Bristow while in grad school at the University of Washington: I was studying choral conducting, whereas Sheila was officially in the organ program but was very active among us choral folk. She sang soprano beautifully, she accompanied on the piano artfully, and she conducted sensitively... Sheila was one of those whom I was always in awe of. A Tacoma resident, she is now choirmaster and organist at St. Barnabas Episcopal Church on Bainbridge Island. She is also the regular pianist with Harmonia (a chorus-and-orchestra combo in Seattle) and teaches at Pacific Lutheran University.

But I suspect that, in her heart of hearts, Bristow sees herself first and foremost as a composer. She has written for many Seattle-area choirs, including the Medieval Women's Choir and the Choral Union at Pacific Lutheran University. *Winter Solstice* was written for Harmonia. The original instrumentation was for the novel and inspired combination of clarinet, vibraphone, and harp (you can hear the truly magical premiere on YouTube). The current version with piano was commissioned by Cascadian Chorale for these performances.

Bristow found her chosen text on an online poetry-sharing platform. Posted in 2014, it is attributed to an author who goes simply by the moniker "asha." Dynamics are crucial to Bristow's setting, with individual phrases swelling mysteriously or rising potently, reflective of the tension of the longest night. Throughout there is an aching for the onset of light, but also for the comfort of a "song of love" to comfort the dead. The music is a fine exemplar of Bristow's craftsmanship and innate musicality.

It has always been spoken of
as the grave and womb of light
this most brief day
this deepest midnight
stiffened with ice and silence.

It is crucial now that there be
harbors and pools and islands
of light

and it is necessary
that there be song
for the dead are everywhere
stricken with grief
wandering among the birds of winter

but with song they may be comforted
and Love, on this longest of nights,
requires the giving of a gift.

— asha

Northern Lights (2008) by Ola Gjeilo (born 1978)

In the late 1990s, composer Eric Whitacre arrived on the choral scene and overtook America like a tsunami. His style, with its sonorous cluster chords, gentle dissonances, and repetitive rhythmic and melodic figures, seemingly entranced all the choral world. Many composers have harnessed these elements, but few have adapted them with such an individual voice as has Ola Gjeilo. He was born in a small town fifteen miles west of Oslo, the capital of Norway, and began composing as a small boy. He studied at the Norwegian Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music in London, and the Juilliard School, and now resides in Manhattan composing for the world's leading choirs.

Gjeilo often pairs sacred texts with secular notions: his setting of “O magnum mysterium” is titled *Serenity*, and *Phoenix* appropriately sets the Agnus Dei from the Catholic Mass. He connects the present words from the Song of Songs with the *aurora borealis*, the “northern lights” that flutter in the sky above the Arctic Circle. He has equated the awe-inspiring, “terrible” beauty described in this text with the lights’ “powerful, electric quality that must have been both mesmerizing and terrifying to people in the past, when no one knew what it was and when much superstition was attached to these experiences.” The music was inspired by a visit in late 2007 to his homeland, “[l]ooking out from the attic window that Christmas in Oslo, over a wintry lake under the stars.” Early in the work, the altos are given prominence in a chant-like melody in their warm low-mid register, but then the sopranos soar above the texture as scintillatingly as the northern lights themselves.

Pulchra es, amica mea,
suavis et decora filia Jerusalem
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.

Beautiful you are, my love,
sweet and handsome daughter of Jerusalem,
terrible as a fortress's sharpness and order.

Averte oculos tuos a me,
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.

Avert your eyes from me,
for they have caused me to fly away.

— Song of Songs 6:3-4

I Wonder as I Wander (1994)

traditional Appalachian carol

expanded by John Jacob Niles (1892–1980)

and arranged by **Steve Pilkington** (born 1956)

On July 16, 1933, John Jacob Niles attended a meeting of evangelicals in rural Murphy, North Carolina. It was there that he encountered a young traveling evangelist named Annie Morgan. Later he described her thus: “Her clothes were unbelievably dirty and ragged, and she, too, was unwashed. Her ash-blond hair hung down in long skeins[...]. But, best of all, she was beautiful, and in her untutored way, she could sing. She smiled as she sang, smiled rather sadly, and sang only a single line of a song.” Charging a quarter per performance, she sang it for Niles seven times. He memorized it, then expanded it into a full melody with three verses, publishing it for voice and piano the following year.

In 1941, Niles’s collaborator, Lewis Henry Horton, made an unaccompanied choral version which has been a staple among American choirs ever since. *I wonder as I wander* soon became further popularized by folk singers of the 1960s, including Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary. We will present a newer arrangement by Steve Pilkington, a professor at Westminster Choir College in New Jersey. His setting mingles the magical scene with bass pedal tones and rhythmically subtle inner voices.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky,
how Jesus the Savior did come for to die
for poor orn’ry people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

When Mary birth’d Jesus, ’twas in a cow’s stall,
with wise men and farmers and shepherds and all.
But high from God’s heaven a star’s light did fall,
and the promise of the ages it then did recall.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
a star in the sky, or a bird on a wing,
or all of God’s angels in heaven for to sing,
he surely could have it, ’cause he was the king.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky...

I Have Loved the Stars (2014) by **Anne M. Guzzo** (born 1968)

When I was a lowly undergraduate at the University of California at Davis, “Annie” Guzzo was a doctoral student in composition. Her approachable demeanor and extensive knowledge made her a simultaneously delightful and authoritative T.A. for the class on modernist music theory. I also remember fondly her sensitive playing of clarinet. Now she directs The Wyoming Festival, a new-music event at Grand Teton National Park, and until recently was on faculty at the University of Wyoming. Her website cites that her “research interests include [...] the cartoon music of Carl W. Stalling, silent movie music, and musical absurdism.” Such open-minded, exuberant eclecticism sums up her personality too.

Some years ago I asked Guzzo if she had written anything for chamber chorus, and she sent me an atmospheric, imaginative setting of a one-line fragment by the nineteenth-century Welsh-English poet Sarah Williams. We will present the composer’s unaccompanied version of this piece, originally written for chorus and string quartet. She has written the following: “The piece is structured in three parts based on the evening star rise. The music opens with rich, wordless chords, the soft blues of dusk, finding only the word ‘love’ amid nonsensical syllables. In the second section, we begin to hear the stars rise with improvisatory vocal sound clusters representing the hazy appearance of the Milky Way and pointillistic stars[...]. High scale segments [...] create shooting stars as this improvisatory section gets denser and denser, revealing the multitude of stars. In the final portion of the composition, the words are at last revealed with a childlike melody and rocking rhythm. The section starts simply and gets more complex, as we are awed by the beauty and mystery of the night sky.”

I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night.

— Sarah (“Sadie”) Williams (1837–1868), from *The Old Astronomer*, adapted

A Winter Ride (2012)

by **John W. Ward** (born 1953)

Imagine yourself astride a horse galloping through a winter landscape, coursing through snowy fields, leaping the shrubs, with wind rushing through your hair. Amy Lowell's poem on this subject is less experimental than much of her work, but captures marvelously the sheer energy of such vigorous activity. Her contemporary, Louis Untermeyer, described her thus: "She was upon the surface of things a Lowell, a New Englander and a spinster. But inside everything was molten like the core of the earth[...]. Given one more gram of emotion, Amy Lowell would have burst into flame and been consumed to cinders."

Such passion also imbues John W. Ward's setting of *A Winter Ride*. (He is not to be confused with John Ward, the English Renaissance madrigalist.) Ward describes himself as an "enthusiastic choral singer and sometime composer" who is "aiming for a fun sing, not high art." His work displays this joy in music-making as well as his intimacy with the choral instrument. *A Winter Ride* flows with the same motion as the poem, concluding as the horse tapers its gallop to a relaxed stop.

Who shall declare the joy of the running!
Who shall tell of the pleasures of flight!
Springing and spurning the tufts of wild heather,
Sweeping, wild-winged, through the blue dome of light.
Everything mortal has moments immortal,
Swift and God-gifted, immeasurably bright.

So with the stretch of the white road before me,
Shining snowcrystals rainbowed by the sun,
Fields that are white, stained with long, cool, blue shadows,
Strong with the strength of my horse as we run.
Joy in the touch of the wind and the sunlight!
Joy! With the vigorous earth I am one.

— Amy Lowell (1874–1925)

Sleep (2000)

by Eric Whitacre (born 1970)

Eric Whitacre is without question the leading American choral composer of his generation. Growing up in Nevada, his ambition was to be a rock-star, and he never considered classical music until his undergraduacy at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. The composer writes: “I was sort of tricked into joining the choir (there were a lot of cute girls in the soprano section) and on the first day of class we started rehearsing the ‘Kyrie’ from the Mozart Requiem. My life was profoundly changed on that day, and I became a choir geek of the highest order.” He proceeded to composition studies at New York’s prestigious Juilliard School, and soon such works as *Cloudburst* (1993) and *Water Night* (1995) became standards for choirs throughout the country. His six Virtual Choir recordings, available on YouTube, have gained international attention through his innovative use of the Internet to incorporate thousands of singers from across the globe into one online performance.

One of Eric Whitacre’s most beloved works, *Sleep*, has an unusually complex history. The year 2000 saw the premiere of his setting of Robert Frost’s famous poem, *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*. (See Andrew Jacobson’s more recent setting later in our program.) The as-yet-unpublished work quickly gained in popularity among America’s choirs until Whitacre received a cease-and-desist order from the Frost estate: he had neglected to secure permission to use the poem, which at the time was still under copyright. Legal wrangling followed, but the Frost estate stayed firm. Finally, in lieu of setting aside his work, Whitacre asked his friend, poet Charles Anthony Silvestri, to craft a new text to suit the pre-existing music, a challenge surmounted with extraordinary skill. Whitacre’s hallmark techniques are all present: compact chords voiced so as to seem less dissonant, harmonies featuring the intervals of minor and major seconds, and carefully notated silences.

The evening hangs beneath the moon,
A silver thread on darkened dune.
With closing eyes and resting head
I know that sleep is coming soon.

Upon my pillow, safe in bed,
A thousand pictures fill my head,
I cannot sleep, my mind’s a-flight;
And yet my limbs seem made of lead.

If there are noises in the night,
A frightening shadow, flickering light;
Then I surrender unto sleep,
Where clouds of dream give second sight.

What dreams may come, both dark and deep,
Of flying wings and soaring leap
As I surrender unto sleep,
As I surrender unto sleep.

— Charles Anthony Silvestri (born 1965)

∞ intermission ∞

Night of silence (2021) by Naomi LaViolette

Culturally, the winter holidays are a time of great celebration, but often they are permeated with emotionally turbulent loneliness and loss. Enter *Night of silence* by Portland pianist and composer Naomi LaViolette with music of comfort and hope. The piano gently intones *Silent night* above the choir's final musing. The poem, co-authored by the composer, says the rest.

The season swells with Noel
Lights are shining, Yuletide dawning
Here I am alone
Looking past gold and glass
A future lost, cold as the frost
Oh where is home?

Carols ring, choirs sing
Candles burning, memories swirling
All around me
Here I stand with open hands
I'm drawing near and I hear
Echoes of joy

In this night of silence
My broken past is left behind
Dreams are born from the ashes
So beautiful as they rise

Tears flow walking through the snow
I can't see the path before me
But hope still burns
A velvet sky arching high
Warmed by starlight, all is bright
And love returns

In this night of silence
The light of heaven shines
Peace, be still, I'm not alone
I'm filled by grace divine

— Amy Hawkins and the composer

Noël Huron (2024)

traditional sixteenth-century French folksong
arranged by **Jeremy Kings** (born 1987)

Jeremy Kings's father was a Lutheran pastor; his mother was the church organist. From her, young Jeremy received his first musical training, though he was rather more interested in technology, especially computer gaming. Attending high school in a suburb of Chicago, he joined the choir and fell in love with the world of choral music. In his senior year, he had the rare opportunity to take a class in music theory and—even more rare—to hear his works performed. He kept singing and composing while a computer science major at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington. In 2010 he relocated to the Seattle area to study computer game programming at the DigiPen Institute of Technology, where he has also taught.

Kings's practical experience composing music for computer games has served him well in developing a deep understanding of counterpoint, harmony, structure, and subtle variety. He puts all of that to good use in his new setting of the so-called "Huron Carol." Seventeenth-century French settlers in the Great Lakes region, such as the Jesuit missionary Jean de Brébeuf, adapted an old Christmas folksong (called *Une jeune pucelle*) and wrote new lyrics in the local Wendat language to help convert the locals to Christianity. It remains popular among Canadian churches today. Kings takes a more modern French translation as his text, incorporating a single phrase in Wendat: "Jesous ahatonhia" ("Jesus is born"). He sets five verses, each handling the tune differently: in unison among the sopranos and altos, then with close treble harmony, then in the tenors and basses, then deftly shifting between all voices, and finally in a three-part round.

Be sure to attend our March concerts, when the Cascadian Chorale will premiere Kings's brilliant half-hour unaccompanied *Requiem*.

Chrétiens, prenez courage, Jésus Sauveur est né! Du malin les ouvrages à jamais son ruinés. Quand il chant merveille à ces troublants appas, ne prêtez plus l'oreilles: Jésus est ne. <i>Jesous ahatonhia</i> .	Christians, take courage, Jesus the Savior is born! The evil one's works are forever ruined. When he sings of marvels as troubling lures, do not lend your ears: Jesus is born.
Oyez cette nouvelle dont un ange est porteur. Oyez, âmes fidèles, et dilatez vos cœurs. Vierge dans l'étable en toure de ses bras l'Enfant-Dieu adorable: Jésus est ne. <i>Jesous ahatonhia</i> .	Hear this news of which an angel is messenger. Hear, faithful souls, and expand your hearts. The virgin in the stable encircles in her arms the adorable child-god: Jesus is born.
Voici que trois Rois Mages, perdus en Orient, déchiffrer ce message écrit au firmament: l'astre les hante. Suivront la bas, cette étoile marchante. Jésus est ne. <i>Jesous ahatonhia</i> .	Behold that three kings, lost in the east, decipher the message written in the sky: the star haunts them. They follow there, this walking star. Jesus is born.

Jésus leur met en tête que l'étoile en la nuit
qui jamais ne s'arrête les conduira vers Lui.
Dans la nuit radieuse en route il sont déjà,
ils vont l'âme joyeuse.

Jésus est né. *Jesous ahatonhia.*

Pour l'Enfant qui repose dans un petit berceau,
humblement il dépose hommages et cadeaux.
Comme eux, l'âme ravie, Chrétiens,
suivons ses pas,
son amour nous convie.

Jésus est né. *Jesous ahatonhia.*

Jesus puts in their heads that the star in the night,
which never stops, will guide them to him.
In the radiant night they are already on the road;
they go with joyous souls.

Jesus is born.

For the child who sleeps in a small cradle,
humbly they deposit remembrances and gifts.
Like them, with ransomed souls, Christians,
follow his footsteps;
his love invites us to the feast.

Jesus is born.

— attributed to Jean de Brébeuf (1593–1649), as translated by Paul Picard (1845–1905)

In the stillness (2007)

by **Sally Beamish** (born 1956)

Sometimes the greatest beauty can be found in the simplest means. London-born composer Sally Beamish understands this well. Her career began as a violist—including with the sextet Raphael Ensemble, but also as a freelancer with the Academy of St Martin-in-the-Fields and the London Sinfonietta. In 1990, however, she moved to Scotland and took on composing full-time. She quickly became one of Britain's leading composers, having written opera, ballet, oratorios, string quartets, symphonies, and many concertos, including for violin, viola, cello, trumpet, clarinet, harp, percussion, piano, fiddle, saxophone, and even saxophone quartet. Now she lives in Brighton, on the southern coast of England.

And yet she is equally adept at the simple world of four-part choral harmony, as exemplified in *In the stillness*. According to the composer, the text imagines “the hushed rapture of a small parish church in a snowbound landscape, just before Christmas.”

In the stillness of a church
Where candles glow,
In the softness of a fall
Of fresh white snow,
In the brightness of the stars
That shine this night,
In the calmness of a pool
Of healing light,
In the clearness of a choir
That softly sings,
In the oneness of a hush
Of angels' wings,

In the mildness of a night
By stable bare,
In the quietness of a lull
Near cradle fair,
There's a patience as we wait
For a new morn,
And the presence of a child
Soon to be born.

— Katrina Shepherd

Blow, blow, thou winter wind, from *When Icicles Hang* (1973)

by **John Rutter** (born 1945)

John Rutter wrote his first Christmas carol while a schoolboy and has stated that early in his career “carols were my calling cards.” In the early 1970s, Oxford University Press gave him responsibility for editing *Carols for Choirs 2*, the sequel to a highly successful anthology of carols old and new by major and minor English composers. Since then, he has established a major international reputation, including large-scale works for chorus and orchestra such as *Gloria* (1974), *Requiem* (1985), and *Mass of the Children* (2003). While some may pigeonhole his works as “light music,” their melodiousness, fine craftsmanship, and sheer joy have guaranteed their continued popularity.

In addition to his ubiquitous carols, Rutter explored the winter season in his early cycle for chorus and orchestra, *When Icicles Hang*. The text of the fourth movement is from Act 2 of Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*. Duke Senior and his entourage are living in exile in the forest. The malcontent Jaques has just completed his famed “All the world’s a stage” speech, lamenting the futility of life, when the duke requests a song. His cousin Amiens responds with these delicate words: “Blow, blow, thou winter wind,” asserting that the harsh weather is not as painful as faithless friendship, a travail with which the betrayed duke’s court is well acquainted. Rutter perceives this context well, infusing Amiens’s empty affirmations that “life is most jolly” with cold, joyless melancholy.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man’s ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing, heigh ho!
Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That does not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember’d not.

Heigh ho! ...

— William Shakespeare (1564–1616), from *As You Like It* (c. 1599)

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening (2019)

by Andrew Jacobson (born 1984)

The poetic scene of Frost's *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* is a simple one: a man with his horse, travelling on a long journey, pauses briefly near a forest to watch the snow fall. The poem is a miniature masterpiece, with a sophisticated but simple rhyme scheme, and Seattle composer Andrew Jacobson responds in kind. The piano's repeated, softly syncopated pattern depicts the steady walk of the horse. Jacobson's melodies are broken into brief phrases, each with its own swell and fall; one palpably senses the rider's sleepily waning attention. At the start of the fourth stanza, the rider drifts to sleep, and even the horse stops. But he awakes firmly, until he and the horse drift from view.

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

— Robert Frost (1874–1963)

Winter Solstice (2022) by Naomi LaViolette

Since 2004 Naomi LaViolette has performed as the regular pianist with the Oregon Repertory Singers in Portland, and she records jazz piano under the pseudonym Lucente Skye. Over the last half-decade she has also made impressive strides into the world of choral composition with a style that is both approachable and emotionally rich. The composer's text to *Winter Solstice* begins by emphasizing the dark and cold, and the composer directs the choir to perform largely without unified breaths; the music is one continuous flow. But at the declaration that "we're not afraid," the tempo moves forward with confidence, and all ends in repose.

Snow and shadow surround us
Earth is cold and still
Guided only by starlight

Days overtaken swiftly by darkness
The trees sleep and the moon hides

This Winter Solstice we take the time
To look inside our shadows

We're not afraid of our darkness
We're not afraid of the hidden places in our hearts

Tears fall as we remember
We write it down, we hold it close
And then we let it burn

Watch it turn to light in the fire
Release into the night
As it dies with the Earth we are reborn
We become barren to return to life

Rest now, and the Earth rests with you

The Unexpected Early Hour, from *A Winter Breviary* (2021) by Reena Esmail (born 1983)

Reena Esmail is one of the rising stars of American classical music. She is currently Artist-in-Residence of the Los Angeles Master Chorale, that metropolis's leading choir, and was recently Composer-in-Residence of our own Seattle Symphony. She has also written for the world's most prominent avant-garde chamber ensemble, the Kronos Quartet. Her music occasionally deals with themes of social justice, particularly voting rights and women's rights.

Many cultural musical traditions—including Catholic liturgies and Hindustani ragas—link specific sounds to certain times of the day. Los Angeles-based composer Reena Esmail has teamed up with American writer, editor, and translator Rebecca Gayle Howell to create a series of three "eco-carols," of which the final work, *The Unexpected Early Hour*, is based on the morning raga called *Ahir Bhairav*. Esmail has thus incorporated elements of the ancient Hindu tune into the English carol tradition. (She grew up attending Catholic midnight

mass every year, longing to compose carols.) Such links are not unusual in her works: her doctoral thesis at Yale was titled *Finding Common Ground: Uniting Practices in Hindustani and Western Art Musicians*, and her output includes works for Baroque orchestra with sitar and tabla. Sometimes her textures hint toward minimalism, with repeated brief phrases and simple melodic modifications.

Howell has called her carol collaborations with Esmail “an interfaith celebration of these cold holy days.” In considering the mystery of the year’s longest night, she has mused: “for us to awaken again to spring’s glory, the day must come to us differently. And, so it does. [...] And in the dawn, the substance of things hoped for are, surprisingly, seen: the darkness did not stop the river from flowing, it did not keep the fields from growing. The Earth’s hope and our place in it cannot be found, because it was not ever lost. Change itself is the gift.”

Praise be! Praise be!

The dim, the dun, the dark withdraws
Our recluse morning’s found.

The river’s alive

The clearing provides

Lie down, night sky, lie down.

I feel the cold wind leaving, gone,

I feel the frost’s relief.

My tracks in the snow can still be erased

In us, the sun believes.

Winter is, Winter ends,

So the true bird calls.

The rocks cry out

My bones cry out

All the trees applaud.

Ev’ry hard thing lauds.

I know the seeding season comes,

I know the ground will spring.

My fate is not night

I don’t need to try

Behold! The dawn, within.

Horizon lights across my thoughts,

Horizon lines redraw.

Inside of my throat a rise of the gold

Inside my chest I thaw.

Winter is, Winter ends,

Nothing stays the same.

The moon strikes high

The sun strikes high

Now I hear your name:

Earth’s Untired Change.

The unexpected early hour

grows the good light long.

Our darkness ends,

O mercy sun,

Trust can warm us all.

Begin again, Again, Again,

O may our day begin!

—Rebecca Gayle Howell (born 1975)



BELLEVUE CHAMBER CHORUS

2024-2025 CONCERT SEASON

Child of Wonder

Saturday, November 2, 2024, 7:30 pm, Bellevue

Sunday, November 3, 2024, 3:00 pm

Seattle First Baptist Church, Seattle

YouTube premiere: Saturday, Nov. 16, 2024, 7 pm

Vox Femina

...featuring choirs from Newport H.S. and the premiere of a new SATB arrangement of "Joy" by Katerina Gimon!

Saturday, March 1, 2025, 7:30 pm

Bellevue First United Methodist Church

YouTube premiere: Saturday, March 15, 2025, 7 pm

On the Origin of Species

Saturday, May 17, 2025, 7:30 pm

First Congregational Church, Bellevue

Sunday, May 18, 2025, 3:00 pm

Emmanuel Episcopal Church,
Mercer Island

YouTube premiere:

Saturday, May 31, 2025, 7 pm



(425) 522-3436

bellevuechamberchorus.org



with Philharmonia Northwest

2024 - 2025 SEASON

Sing Love, Shout Joy!

Sunday, December 8, 2024 - 3pm

Bellevue Presbyterian Church, Bellevue

Conducted by Dr. Brennan Michaels

Light and Love Abound

Sunday, February 23, 2025 - 3pm

Bastyr University Chapel, Kenmore

Conducted by Dr. Daniel Mahraun

The Sacred Veil

Sunday, May 18, 2025 - 3pm

Bastyr University Chapel, Kenmore

Conducted by Dr. Steven Zopfi



www.kirklandchoralsociety.org



2024 - 2025
Concert Season

<https://www.masterchoruseastside.org/>

A "Choral" Christmas Carol

Sunday December 8th, 2024, 3:00 PM

Faith United Methodist Church

3924 Issaquah-Pine Lake Rd SE

Sammamish, WA 98029

All Together Now!

Sunday March 16th, 2025, 3:00 PM

Our Savior Lutheran Church

745 Front St. S

Issaquah, 98027

All Things Bright and Beautiful

Sunday May 18th, 2025, 3:00 PM

Our Savior Lutheran Church

745 Front St. S

Issaquah, 98027

All-American Independence Celebration

Sunday June 29th, 2025, 3:00 PM

Pickering Barn, Issaquah WA

Cascadian Chorale

Gary D. Cannon, Artistic Director

Solstice and Dawn

Saturday, Dec 7, 7:30 pm - Redmond

Sunday, Dec 8, 3:00 pm - Mercer Island

Cascadian Composers

Saturday, March 22, 7:30 pm - Bellevue

Sunday, March 23, 3:00 pm - Redmond

Pick a Mass

Saturday, June 7, 7:30 pm - Redmond

Sunday, June 8, 3:00 pm - Bellevue



For venue and program details, visit

www.CascadianChorale.org

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Ticket sales cover only 30% of our organizational costs, with gifts from supporters making up the remainder. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and your tax-deductible gift is welcome and appreciated very much. See "Support Us" at www.CascadianChorale.org.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHOIR'S DECORATIVE SPRAYS?

When darkness surrounds us we search for assurance that light will come. If we find this assurance we can accept the darkness, embrace its beauty, opening our eyes to see that there is always some luminescence—however dim or small—and that some force—from within or without—will re-open the world to light.

In all cultures myths and celebrations help us through this dark journey.

In many First Nations, Winter Solstice is seen as a time of reflection and replenishment. It is a time of gathering together. A time for song, dance and for the gift of storytelling. A time for looking forward and for recognizing the blessings of the past year. It is said among the Hopi people that the Kachina spirit beings come down from the mountains at the winter solstice to bring the sun back to the world. This marks the renewal of life, “the day the sun turns around.” Men from the tribe wear costumes to represent the kachina spirits at ceremonial dances. Some of the choir sprays portray a Kachina stylized mask.

We know the science that explains the daily rising of the sun, and we have electricity to keep its loss at bay during the night hours. Perhaps that has lost some of the wonder of the incredible fact that every morning there is ...dawn. In ancient Egypt they were awed by the rising of the sun each day. They attributed this momentous event to the god of the dawn, Khepri. The sun moves across the sky during the day, then, exhausted by its work, descends to the underworld. Khepri pushes the sun through the underworld and into the morning sky so it can travel across for another day. Khepri, often translated as “to come into existence”, is represented by the scarab holding a sun. Some of the choir sprays portray this Egyptian symbol of the Khepri, God of the Dawn.

Common through all myths, stories and songs, and even fears in the night, is the deep belief that in the dark something heartening glimmers and no matter how impenetrable the blackness may seem, the sun will return and we will begin again.

—Genie Middaugh



Our Mission

is to express and nurture a love of choral music by:

- inspiring and educating our singers, our audience, and the broader community;
- presenting quality performances of fine choral music from various historical, cultural, and stylistic traditions; and
- collaborating with composers, professional musicians, and other arts organizations.

Our Vision

is a community engaged in great choral music performed with passion and skill.

Find our web site and links to our social media at CascadianChorale.org.



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A square QR code that, when scanned, likely leads to the website www.seattlesings.org.

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