

**Choral Union**  
*Music for Choir and Percussion*

Friday, March 15, 2024 at 7:30pm  
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University  
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

# Choral Union

## *Music for Choir and Percussion*

Richard Nance, *conductor*

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.  
Please disable the audible signal on all watches and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.  
Use of cameras, recording equipment and all digital devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

### PROGRAM

**Cantate** ..... **Daniel Schreiner (b. 1990)**  
*World premiere of this version for percussion and choir*

English translation of Latin text taken from Psalms 95, 97, and 98:

Sing to the Lord a new song,  
sing to the Lord all the earth.  
For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;  
He is to be feared above all gods.

We praise thee. We bless thee.  
We adore thee. We glorify thee.  
Proclaim His salvation! Proclaim His glory!  
Proclaim His wonders among all people.

**The Miracle of the Spring** ..... **Bob Chilcott (b. 1955)**  
Texts by Charles Bennett (b. 1954)  
Diann Spicer and Hailey Wharton, *soloists*

#### 1. Where water waits

If I follow a white cloud,  
one white cloud in a blue sky,  
perhaps I'll find the place  
where water waits.

Or maybe the cactus wren  
who drinks from white blossom,  
will show me where  
the flower of water opens.

If I sip the burning air  
as if it were a question  
perhaps I'll learn to taste  
the smell of water.

At night the brilliant stars  
are raindrops in heaven.  
Each of them ready to fall  
as the light of water.

#### 2. The source of the spring

In the bed of a dried-up river  
I found a broken boat,  
swept away by floods  
and stranded there.

Today I'll repair its hull  
and heal the gash  
where its floating  
was broken by a stone.

Tonight I'll make an oar  
from a desert tree  
and row myself to sleep  
by following a star.

Tomorrow I'll drift on a lake  
and go where I am taken,  
until in the end I find  
the source of the spring.

### 3. To sing of water

The desert opens its mouth  
to sing of water,  
as if the sand was asking  
to be a beach.

Once a lake was here:  
under the surface are fish  
made out of stone,  
but still swimming.

Go down deep enough,  
And you'll find the place  
Where a wave  
is waiting to break.

Under our feet is a sea,  
I feel it call in my blood  
as if I were a fish  
who longed for the ocean.

### 4. The desert

I went to the desert  
because I was so dry,  
I knew the sand and rock  
would be like my skin.

I came to the desert  
because I wanted to taste  
water that fell as rain  
where the light was young.

I stayed in the desert  
because I learned its name  
was a drop which washed me  
clear of all my days.

I became the desert  
because I wanted you to come  
and let me show you  
what it means to drink.

### 5. The voice of water

Under these rocks  
I hear the voice of water  
speaking a cool language  
beneath these scorching stones.

The soft voice of water  
asking if I am thirsty,  
how can it know I am dry  
as an autumn leaf,

O water rush to touch me,  
gush and dash in streams.  
O let me hear the tears  
a mountain cries.

O water speak to me know  
And I'll listen by drinking.  
O let the voice of water  
sing in my mouth.

**Cloudburst**..... **Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)**

Text by Octavio Paz (1914-1998), adapted by Eric Whitacre

Alonso Brizuela and Lindsey Hansen-Bravo, *soloists*  
Hailey Wharton • Jennifer Gorham • Alison Shane • Emily Shane  
Nick Pharris • Sam Eagle • Philip Nesvig • Brent Johnson, *handbells*  
*Handbells courtesy of Poulsbo First Lutheran Church*

English translation of Spanish text:

The rain...  
  
Eyes of shadow-water,  
eyes of well-water,  
eyes of dream-water.

Blue suns, green whirlwinds,  
birdbeaks of light pecking open  
pomegranate stars.

But tell me, burnt earth, is there no water?  
Only blood, only dust,  
only naked footsteps on the thorns?  
The rain awakens...

We must sleep with open eyes,  
we must dream with our hands,  
we must dream the dreams  
of a river seeking its course,

of the sun dreaming its worlds,  
we must dream aloud,  
we must sing till the song puts forth roots,  
trunk, branches, birds, stars,  
we must find the lost word,  
and remember what the blood,  
the tides, the earth, and the body say,  
and return to the point of departure...

**Moonlight Sound Design ..... Raimonds Tiguls (b. 1972)**

Text by Raimonds Tiguls

Jennifer Gorham, *soloist* • Miho Takekawa, *marimba*

In the moonlight, time stands still.  
The present melts into the past,  
and my spirit communes with souls  
that have passed before me.

I can never explain, can never tell you.  
No!

In the night, it smells of morning.

And in the silence,  
flowers and birds herald the light.  
Tears in my eyes,  
like dewdrops on flowers  
that, with the light, will disappear,  
having been lost in darkness.

I can never explain, can never tell you.  
No!

**Fantasia for Choir and Marimba ..... Jan Moeyaert (b. 1981)**

Miho Takekawa, *marimba*

**Three Nocturnes ..... Dan Forrest (b. 1976)**

Jonica Beatie, *soloist*

**I. Stars**

Text by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Alone in the night  
On a dark hill,  
With pines around me  
Spicy and still,

And a heaven full of stars  
Over my head,  
White, topaz,  
And misty red;

Myriads with beating  
Hearts of fire

That aeons  
Cannot vex or tire;

Up the dome of heaven  
Like a great hill,  
I watch them marching  
Stately and still.

And I know that I  
Am honored to be  
Witness  
Of so much majesty.

**II. Lightly stepped a yellow star**

Text by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Lightly stepped a yellow star  
To its lofty place –  
Loosed the Moon her silver hat  
From her lustral Face –

All of Evening softly lit  
As an Astral Hall –  
Father, I observed to Heaven,  
You are punctual.

### III. ...Thou motive of the stars

Text by Walt Whitman (1819-1892)

O vast Rondure, swimming in space,  
Cover'd all over with visible power and beauty,  
Alternate light and day  
and the teeming spiritual darkness,

Unspeakable high processions of sun and moon  
and countless stars above,

Thou transcendant! Light of light!  
shedding forth universes, thou centre of them!

Thou mightier centre  
of the true, the good, the loving!

Thou moral, spiritual fountain!  
Affection's source!

Thou reservoir! Thou pulse!  
Thou motive of the stars, suns, systems,  
that circling, move, in order safe, harmonious,  
Across the shapeless vastness of space.

### Program Notes

#### ***Cantate* (note by Daniel Schreiner)**

*Cantate* was written for the Central Washington University Chamber Choir's performance at the 2020 American Choral Directors Association Northwest Division Convention. This piece, whose title translates to "sing," took on special significance as it was one of the last pieces sung at the convention before COVID silenced many choirs for over a year. The piece is intended to convey joy – not only with bombastic fanfare and rhythmic intensity, but also with reflective moments of contentment. *Cantate* was composed for unaccompanied choir in its original form. Percussion parts were added for tonight's performance.

#### ***The Miracle of the Spring* (note by Bob Chilcott)**

*The Miracle of the Spring* was written for Magdalen College School, Oxford, in 2014. The Director of Music, John Cullen, wanted a piece for choir and percussion instruments in the vein of my earlier work *The Making of the Drum*. I had read a poem by Charles Bennett, which I loved, on the subject of water, and I asked him to expand the idea into a suite of five poems, which ultimately make up the texts for this piece. The idea also reflected a conversation I'd had on a visit to the United States about the importance of water to all of us. In the cycle, I have used glockenspiel and bell tree to depict the flow and sparkle of water, and a pair of log drums to reflect the dryness of the desert. The discovery of the spring at the end of the piece reminds us of the life-giving properties of water and how much we need to respect and value it as one of our greatest resources.

#### ***Cloudburst* (note by Richard Nance)**

*Cloudburst* is one of Eric Whitacre's first pieces to be widely performed. It was composed in 1991-1992 and won the American Choral Directors Association "Composers of the Future" competition. The first half of the work is a reverent and meditative setting of the text by Octavio Paz – "a spiritual journey with total respect for the power of water and profundity of the rebirth." Whitacre makes liberal use of aleatoric effects and stacked dissonance, but intersperses a chantlike melody sung by the baritone soloist, followed by warm homophonic harmony in the choir. The soloist returns, this time speaking text over an aleatoric pattern in the sopranos, followed by a group chant in the lower voices. The next section is announced in bright dissonance by the voices, followed again by brief consonant chordal writing that leads to a new idea – the voices entering softly in "bell tones," gradually building to a vigorous eight-part dissonance. This gives way to a buoyant and full final statement of the text, which ends with a chant-like soprano solo. And then comes the cloudburst, beginning with soft suspended cymbal, windchimes and a theme played in two octaves by handbells. The chorus enters softly and builds a tone cluster, and piano, bass drum and thunder sheets announce the storm has arrived. During the cloudburst the chorus sings aleatoric melodies and uses body percussion – finger snaps, claps and thigh slaps to imitate raindrops, and the percussion ensemble rages until the climax of the storm. As the storm moves on, the percussion effects gradually dissipate, and the chorus repeats passages from the opening of the piece.

#### ***Fantasia for Choir and Marimba* (note by Richard Nance)**

When planning music for this concert I was exploring for works that involved choir and marimba, and stumbled upon a YouTube video of this terrific little piece. Composer Jan Moeyaert says, "I just wanted to write a fun piece, without words, exploring different sounds and moods that this interesting combination of choir and marimba can produce." The piece opens with a low melody sung by female voices over warm harmony in the marimba and lower voices. This gives

way to a playful dancelike section in 10/8 time that ends in tight jazz harmony and shifting meters. Next comes a brief legato section in 4/4 time, with the melody sung in octaves by high first sopranos and second altos over long sustained lines in the other voices. The marimba then plays a long cadenza that begins slowly and builds in speed before a sudden change to a slow, four-measure reprise of the opening theme. The dancelike 10/8 then returns and leads to a joyful ending.

### ***Moonlight Sound Design* (note by Raimonds Tiguls)**

*Moonlight Sound Design* was commissioned and premiered by the youth choir Kamēr conducted by Māris Sirmāis in Riga, Latvia in 2012. It is dedicated to my father who died by way of an accident. The title of the piece is inspired by the fact that the studio I have is in my father's country house in an attic room, and the night moon shines directly into it. The piece should not sound sad, but rather ethereal. It is more about longing than sadness.

### ***Three Nocturnes* (note by Dan Forrest)**

A commission for a piece for chorus and percussion ensemble came at a perfect time for me, when I had been marveling at the night skies on the plains of Kansas. I chose three texts about stars which were penned by different authors in diverse styles, but which all expressed a sense of wonder at the night sky.

The first movement, *Stars*, opens up sonic space as a way to paint the expanse of the heavens. A mysterious and almost exotic introduction gives way to a burst of color and dynamic, as the stars appear over the treetops. A contrasting middle section of the poem provides opportunity for a fiery B section, before a return to the opening moods leaves us alone in that same "sonic space."

The second movement, *Lightly stepped a yellow star*, paints its wonderful text with staccato singing and an additive contrapuntal texture. Again, a middle section provides contrast; but this time, the contrast is velvety and ethereal, with hints of the energetic first section popping up between phrases. The one-word punch-line of the poem, "punctual," is then revealed. Several hints of this temporal element are present in the piece – from the "cogs and gears" clockwork texture to a subtle hint of Big Ben!

The third movement, ...*Thou motive of the stars*, is the most majestic and declamatory of the set, building to the overwhelming chorale-style setting of the title line. Near the end, the mysterious silence of the opening bars of the whole set returns, and the entire set ends with the "stars" theme and the sense of space from the first movement.

## **Pacific Lutheran University Choral Union**

Richard Nance, *conductor* • Sheila Bristow, *accompanist*

### **Soprano**

Meredith Bautista  
Jonica Beatie  
Sue Byrd  
Katie Coddington  
Jennifer Gorham  
Lindsey Hansen-Bravo  
Anna Kwon  
Kayla Linqvist  
Nancy Nole  
Amy Onstot  
Daniella Papernik  
Amanda Webb  
Hailey Wharton

### **Alto**

Debbie Dion  
Nicole Fife  
Karen Fulmer  
Debbie Hushagen  
Yelena Kovalsky  
Cindy Luebke  
Patti Nance  
Becky Purser  
Janelle Purser  
Alison Shane  
Emily Shane  
Diann Spicer  
Lori Titus  
Anne Urlic

### **Tenor**

Neil Asay  
Tom Cameron  
John Carlsen  
Samuel Eagle  
Eric Faris  
John McGilliard  
John Ockwell  
Rich Ockwell  
Nick Pharris  
Kenneth Prince  
Ethan Wiederspan

### **Bass**

Chris Berntsen  
Alonso Brizuela  
Adam Freemantle  
Brent Johnson  
JT Harpel  
Todd Kelley  
Joshua Luebke  
Philip Nesvig  
Peter Seto  
Ryan Shane  
Alex Stahl  
Larry Wiseman

### **Percussion Ensemble**

Miho Takekawa, *director*

Kyle Gough • Evan Nakanishi • Quinn Rasmussen • TJ Wheeler