

Choral Union

In the Midst of Your Hands

Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 7:30pm

Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University
College of Professional Studies / Department of Music present

Choral Union

In the Midst of Your Hands

Richard Nance, *conductor*

Saturday, March 18, 2023 at 7:30pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

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

To the Hands..... Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

I. Prelude

[No text - choir on vowels only]

II. quid sunt plagae istae

quid sunt plagae istae (*what are those wounds*)
in medio manuum tuarum (*in the midst of your hands*)
quid sunt plagae istae (*what are those wounds*)
in medio manuum nostrum (*in the midst of our hands*)

[text from Buxtehude's *Ad manus* — Zechariah 13:6 — adapted by Caroline Shaw, with the addition of *in medio manuum nostrum*.]

III. Her beacon-hand beckons

Her beacon-hand beckons:
give
give to me
those yearning to breathe free
tempest-tossed they cannot see
what lies beyond the olive tree
whose branch was lost amid the pleas for mercy

give
give to me
your tired fighters fleeing flying
from the
from
I will be your refuge
We will be your refuge

[Text by Caroline Shaw, responding to the 1883 sonnet "The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus, which was mounted on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in 1903.]

IV. ever in the window sills

ever in the window sills
or the beveled edges

of the aging wooden frames that hold
old photographs

hands folded gently in her lap
ever in the crevices
the never-ending efforts of
the grandmother's tendons tending

to her bread and empty chairs left for Elijah
where are they now
in caverna (*in the clefts of the rock*)

[Text by Caroline Shaw — the final line, *in caverna*, is from Buxtehude's *Ad latus* — the line from the biblical Song of Songs: *in froaminibus petrae, in caverna maceriae*, or “in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow of the cliff”]

V. Global figures

[Text: Global figures of internally displaced persons, by country. Source: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) data as of May 2015.]

VI. I will hold you

I would hold you
I will love you
I will hold you
ever will I hold you
ever will I enfold you
in medio manuum tuarum (*in the midst of your hands*)

Ubi Caritas Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivim.
Et ex corde diligamus, nos sincero.
Gaudium quod est immensum:
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est,
in medio nostri sit Christus Deus.
Glorianter vultum tuum,
cum beatis videamus
Gaudium immensum glorianter.

*Where there is charity and love, God is there.
The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Let us revere and love the living God.
And from a sincere heart let us love one another.
Joy that is immense:
The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Where there is charity and love, God is there,
Let Christ dwell in the midst of us.
The glory of your face, O Christ,
may we also see
with immense joy and glory.*

INTERMISSION

Passion and Resurrection..... Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)

Amy Fuller and Aria Elise Manning, *soprano soloists*
Gillian Dockins, Rachel Bridges, T.J. Wheeler, Luke Hartley, *quartet*
Jennifer Gorham and Caryl Dowd, *choir soprano soloists*

I

In that town was a woman who lived a sinful life. She heard that Jesus was eating in the Pharisee's house, so she brought an alabaster jar full of perfume and stood behind Jesus, by his feet, crying and wetting his feet with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume on them.

[Luke 7:37-38]

Quartet (translated from Latin)

Leave me alone, Lord. My life makes no sense.
 Why is man so important to you?
 Why pay attention to what he does?
 You inspect him every morning
 and test him every minute.
 Won't you look away long enough for me
 to swallow my spittle?
 Can't you ever forgive my sin?
 Can't you pardon the wrong I do?
 Soon I will be in my grave, and I'll be gone
 When you look at me.
 [Job 7:16-21]

Soprano soloist

Woe is me,
 for my foolish love of debauchery
 and my cleaving to iniquity
 have become a deep night unto me
 in which no light shines.
 Accept thou the wellsprings of my tears,
 thou who drawest the waters of the sea

up into the clouds.

Turn thy countenance upon the sobbing
 of my heart,
 thou who hast come from Heaven
 in thy inexpressible sacrifice.
 I shall kiss thy immaculate feet;
 I shall dry them with the tresses of my hair.
 In Paradise, Eve seeing them approaching,
 hid herself in fear.
 Who will examine the multitude of my sins,
 and thy judgements?
 O my Savior, Redeemer of my soul,
 do not turn away from me:
 I am thy handmaiden,
 thou who art infinitely merciful.
 [from *Byzantine liturgy*]

Chorus

Thy sins are forgiven;
 Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.
 [Luke 7:48, 50]

II

Judas, worst of the traffickers, approached the Lord with a kiss: he like an innocent lamb refused not the kiss of Judas; for a few pence he delivered Christ into the hands of sinners.

Chorus

My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.
 My Father, if this cup may not pass away from
 me, except I drink it, thy will be done.
 [Matthew 26:38-42]

They stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.
 When they had platted a crown of thorns,
 they put it upon his head,
 and a reed in his right hand:
 and they have bowed the knee before him,
 and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews.
 And they spit upon him.
 And after they had mocked him,
 they took the robe off from him,
 and put his own raiment on him,
 and led him away to crucify him.
 [Matthew 27:28-31]

Father, forgive them,
 for they know not what they do.
 [Luke 23:34]

Quartet

My friend betrayed me by the token of a kiss:
 whom I shall kiss, that is he, hold him fast.
 That was the wicked token which he gave,
 who, by a kiss accomplished murder.
 Unhappy man, he relinquished the price of blood,
 and in the end hanged himself.
 [from *Byzantine liturgy*]

Soprano soloist

How great is thy love for mankind, O Lord!
 Thou bent down and washed Judas' feet,
 although he denied and betrayed thee.
 [from *Byzantine liturgy*]

III

*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:
 yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.
 He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:
 the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

[Isaiah 53:4-5]

Soprano soloist

At thy mystic Supper,
admit me to thy communion,
O Son of God.
For I shall not betray the secret to thy enemies,
nor give thee the kiss of Judas.
But, like the thief, I beseech thee:
Lord, remember me
when thou comest into thy kingdom.
[from *Byzantine liturgy*]

Chorus

Verily I say unto thee:
Today thou shall be with me in paradise.
[*Luke 23:43*]

Soprano soloist

The grieving Mother
stood beside the cross weeping
where her Son was hanging.
Through her weeping soul,
compassionate and grieving, a sword passed.
Who is the man who would not weep
if seeing the Mother of Christ in such agony?
[from *Stabat Mater*]

Chorus

Woman, behold thy son!
Behold thy mother!
[*John 19:26*]

Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?
(*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*)
[*Matthew 27:46*]

They have pierced my hands and my feet,
They have counted all my bones.

They divided my garments among them,
and upon my garments they have cast lots.
[*Psalm 22:17-19*]

The enemy hath persecuted my soul,
they have smitten my life down to the ground,
they have made me to dwell in darkness,
as those that have been long dead.
[*Psalm 143:3*]

Soprano soloist

By his stripes are we healed.
[*Isaiah 53:5*]

Chorus

I thirst!
[*John 19:28*]

It is finished!
[*John 19:30*]

Quartet

Father, into thy hands
I commend my spirit.
[*Luke 23:46*]

IV

The Holy Women, bearing myrrh, come early in the morning to pour spices upon the tomb.

Soprano soloists and Quartet
(*translated from Latin*)

O, dulcet wood (cross),
whose dulcet nails held the dulcet burden.
You (the cross) alone held the Ruler of Heaven
and Lord.

Chorus

Why seek ye among the dead, as a mortal,
the One who abides in everlasting light?
Behold the linens of burial,
the Lord is risen!
[*Luke 24:5-6*]

Quartet

Woman, why deepest thou?
Woman, whom seekest thou?

Soprano soloist

Sir, if thou hast borne him hence,
Tell me where thou hast laid him,
and I will take him away.
[*John 20:15*]

Quartet and Chorus

Mariam. (*Mary.*)

Soprano soloists

Rabboni. (*Master, teacher.*)

Program Notes

(Notes made available by the composers)

Caroline Shaw: *To the Hands*

Caroline Shaw is a musician who moves among roles, genres, and mediums, trying to imagine a world of sound that has never been heard before but has always existed. She works often in collaboration with others, as producer, composer, violinist, and vocalist. She is the recipient of the 2013 Pulitzer Prize in Music, several Grammy awards, an honorary doctorate from Yale, and a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship. She has worked with a range of artists including Rosalía, Renée Fleming, and Yo-Yo Ma, and she has contributed music to films and tv series including *Fleishman is in Trouble*, *Bombshell*, *Yellowjackets*, *Maid*, *Dark*, and *Beyoncé's Homecoming*.

To the Hands was composed in 2016 as a response to *Ad manus* from Dietrich Buxtehude's 17th century cycle of seven cantatas, *Membra Jesu Nostri*. The work begins inside Buxtehude's sound, but this language is quickly expanded, colored and broken, as the piece's core considerations, of the suffering of those around the world seeking refuge, and of our role and responsibility in these global and local crises, gradually come into focus.

The prelude turns the tune of *Ad manus* into a wordless plainchant melody, punctured later by the strings' introduction of an unsettling pattern. The second movement fragments Buxtehude's choral setting of the central question, *quid sunt plagae istae in media manuum tuarum*, or "what are these wounds in the midst of your hands." It settles finally on an inversion of the question, so that we reflect, "What are these wounds in the midst of our hands?" We notice what may have been done to us, but we also question what we have done and what our role has been in these wounds we see before us.

The text that follows in the third movement is a riff on Emma Lazarus' sonnet *The New Colossus*, famous for its engraving at the base of the Statue of Liberty. The poem's lines "Give me your tired, your poor," and "Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free," along with its reference to the statue's "beacon-hand," present a very different image of a hand — one that is open, beckoning, and strong. No wounds are to be found there — only comfort for those caught in a dangerous and complex environment. While the third movement operates in broad strokes from a distance, the fourth zooms in on the map so far that we see the intimate scene of an old woman in her home, maybe setting the table for dinner alone. Who is she, where has she been, whose lives has she left? This simple image melts into a meditation on the words *in caverna* (a cleft in the rock - a place of warmth and protection) from the Song of Solomon, found in Buxtehude's fourth section, *Ad latus*.

In the fifth movement the harmony is passed around from one string instrument to another, overlapping only briefly, while numerical figures are spoken by the choir. These are global figures of internally displaced persons, by country, sourced from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) data reported in May 2015. Sometimes data is the cruelest and most honest poetry.

The sixth and final movement unfolds the words *in caverna* into the tumbling and comforting promise of "ever ever" — "ever ever will I hold you, ever ever will I enfold you." They could be the words of Christ, or of a parent or friend or lover, or even of a nation.

Dan Forrest: *Ubi Caritas*

Dan Forrest has been described as having "an undoubted gift for writing beautiful music...that is truly magical" (*NY Concert Review*), with works hailed as "magnificent, very cleverly constructed sound sculpture" (*Classical Voice*), and "superb writing...full of spine-tingling moments" (*Salt Lake Tribune*). Forrest has received numerous awards and distinctions, and his works have become well established in the repertoire of choirs around the world via festivals, recordings, radio/TV broadcasts, and premieres in prominent international venues. *Ubi Caritas* was composed in 2022 for the Hickory (NC) Choral Society. In this work, Forrest transports the ancient chant into the 21st century, slowly unfolding layer after layer of beauty, and gradually adding vocal polyphony over an ethereal accompaniment.

Ēriks Ešņvalds: *Passion and Resurrection*

Ēriks Ešņvalds is one of the most sought-after composers working today, with a busy commission schedule and performances of his music heard on every continent. After study at the Latvian Baptist Theological Seminary and the Latvian Academy of Music, he became a member of the State Choir Latvija. In 2011 he was awarded the two-year position of Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. Since then Ēriks has won multiple awards for his work and undertakes many international residencies working on his music and lecturing. Recently, Ešņvalds has become the Head of the Department of Composition at the Latvian Academy of Music.

Passion and Resurrection was written in 2005 and premiered by Māris Sirmāis and the State Choir Latvija. Eschewing the single narrative perspective that characterizes the great Passion settings of the past, the composer has assembled an interlocking mosaic of texts from the gospels, from Byzantine and Roman liturgies, and from the Old Testament. The result (though given a seamless continuity by the music) is fragmentary — a series of snapshots, the tale told elliptically (if directly), combining action and reflection in equal measure; linear chronology is not always strictly observed, and the story begins with a fallen woman acknowledging the divinity of Jesus, and ends with Mary Magdalene (who may be that same fallen woman) recognizing the risen Christ. This circularity (and there are similar echoes and pre-echoes within the narrative) serves to emphasize that these are not historical events but are occurring in an eternal present, just as the passion and resurrection of Christ are re-enacted and re-experienced by Christians every week.

There are no designated characters in the piece: the chorus voices the words of Jesus and reports on events. The prominent solo soprano is a distinctively Marian and maternal presence, as the woman who anoints Christ's feet, as the visionary Mary Magdalene, and as a tenderly sympathetic observer of Jesus and his mother's suffering. The string ensemble by turns amplifies the choral textures, offers a static underpinning with sustained drones, and subtly undercuts the vocal message with ironic counterpoints of its own.

The work is in four parts, each prefaced by lines from scripture, which play without a break. Part I opens with four solo voices singing a setting of *Parce mihi* by the sixteenth-century Spaniard Cristóbal de Morales; seemingly preludial, this *objet trouvé* is soon established as an important other-worldly presence as gently dissonant string chords are laid over it, and the solo quartet returns subsequently with Morales-derived material, always a hauntingly alien feature in the musical landscape. The soprano recitative that follows is both lamenting and ecstatic, supported by long-drawn string textures which reveal the distinctive harmonic tincture of the work — fluidly modal, flecked with chromaticism, and inclined to downwards semitonal step-movement in the bass. The choral benediction that ends this section has a beatific calm, though as it dissolves into whispers uncertainty returns with an uneasily transparent string chorale.

Part II begins with open-fifth drones in the lower instruments, anchoring the restless lament of the choir in a static D minor, sardonic violin figures offering their own dissident commentary. As the drama intensifies, the sense of foreboding increases, with downward harmonic shifts and greater chromatic density. There is a pounding muscularity to this account of Jesus's humiliation which culminates in hammered shouts of 'crucify', haloed by a shrieking string texture 'imitating extremely nervous clamors of seagulls' (the composer instructs). After a fortissimo call for forgiveness, 'they know not what they do', subject to multiple repetitions, the solo quartet returns, their tonal certainties anointed with healing balm from the soprano, though as the chorus murmurs a Latin version of the quartet's words, instability returns as the strings tell a different harmonic story.

Part III has a simple rondo structure. Over an 'eternal' pedal C, the soloist offers up an extended meditation, ambiguous in modality and embellished with grace notes and glissandi, while a single violin provides an agitated, flickering descant. Twice the soloist is answered by the choir with luminous diatonic clarity, as two lone sopranos soar to seraphic heights; the second time around this blissful resignation erupts into anguished cries and the final grieving is shared by the soloist and the choir, the strings adding to the desolation with subtle enrichments of the voicing. Again, the solo quartet has the last word, as Jesus gives up his spirit.

The melismatic, rapturous unaccompanied solo that opens Part IV is echoed by hushed choral chanting, cushioned by strings. The landscape is bare, as sighing pairs of chords haltingly descend over an inner pedal. The dazzling moment when 'the Lord is risen' is exultant and brief; there is a hiatus of uncertainty before the act of recognition that is the crux of the matter is heralded by the solo quartet. Their rapt repetition of 'Mariam' draw in the choir, hesitant at first yet ultimately glowing as they settle into a gentle oscillation of two chords; the voice of Mary Magdalene soars above them with quiet radiance. Over and over again they call to each other, hypnotic and serene, as a luminescent string chorale slowly ascends to the heights. Yet there is an ambiguity at the very end — which of the two chords is perceived as the 'tonic'? This lack of finality is essential, for the story must, and will, begin again.

— from notes by Gabriel Jackson © 2011

Pacific Lutheran University Choral Union

Richard Nance, *conductor*

Paul Tegels, *accompanist*

Soprano

Maya Adams
Jonica Beatie
Sue Byrd
Katie Coddington
Melissa Dier
Caryl Dowd
Amy Fuller
Jennifer Gorham
Lindsey Hansen
Anna Kwon
Kayla Linquist
Aria Elise Manning
Nancy Nole
Angela Owen
Diann Spicer

Alto

Rachel Bridges
Gillian Dockins
Nicole Fife
Karen Fulmer
Anika Hille
Debbie Hushagen
Amanda Kelly
Cindy Luebke
Patti Nance
Becky Purser
Janelle Purser
Alison Shane
Lori Titus
Anne Urlie

Tenor

Neil Asay
Sam Brown
Tom Cameron
John Carlsen
Eric Faris
Miles Jackson
Trevor Kytola
John H. McGilliard
Sean Murphy
John Ockwell
Nick Pharris
Ian Rice
Roland Robinson
T.J. Wheeler

Bass

Alan Aplin
David Bales
Chris Berntsen
Eric Bostrom
Alonso Brizuela
Adam Freemantle
Luke Hartley
Brent Johnson
Todd Kelley
Joshua Luebke
Ethan Moon
Ken Owen
Philip Nesvig
Peter Seto
Ryan Shane
Alex Stahl
Larry Wiseman

Orchestra

Violin 1

Dawn Posey, *concertmaster*
Quinn Price, *assistant concertmaster*
Vanessa Moss
Pam Liu
Lizzy Pedersen

Violin 2

John Kim, *principal*
Hyekyung Seo
Mary Manning
Karen Sorensen
Lea Fetterman

Viola

Caitlyn Fukai, *principal*
Rafael Howell
Padua Candy
Steve Creswell

Cello

Mara Finkelstein, *principal*
Holly Reeves
Grant Olson

Contrabass

Anna Doak, *principal*
Todd Gowers

French Horn

Ben Birmingham

Piano

Paul Tegels

Percussion

Ethan Moon
T.J. Wheeler