

# **Choir of the West**

Wednesday, April 18, 2018 at 8pm  
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Pacific Lutheran University  
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music present

## Choir of the West

Richard Nance, Conductor

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Welcome to Lagerquist Concert Hall.

Please disable the audible signal on all watches, pagers and cellular phones for the duration of the concert.

Use of cameras, recording equipment and all electronic devices is not permitted in the concert hall.

## Program

A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.....Martin Luther (1483-1546)/arr. W.B. Olds

### *The Music of Ēriks Ešenvalds*

#### I

#### **O, She Doth Teach The Torches To Burn Bright (2013)**

Text: William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616)

Josh Carlisle, *tenor*

#### **Long Road (2010)**

Text: Pauline Bārda (1800 – 1983), English translation by Singley Lloyd

Jennifer Rhyne, *bass flute*

Solo octet: Ally Atwood and Julie Landes, *soprano* • Rachel Bridges and Morgan Myers, *mezzo-soprano*  
Daniel Beal and Josh Carlisle, *tenor* • Karl Eickhoff and Brent Johnson, *bass*

#### II

#### **A Soldier's Mother's Lullaby (2015)**

Text: *Anthem for Doomed Youth*, by Wilfred Owen (1893 – 1918)

*A Soldier's Mother's Lullaby* (extract), by Jack Whalen

Jennifer Gorham, *soprano* • Luke Hartley, *baritone*

#### **There Will Come Soft Rains (2016)**

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933)

#### III

#### **Rivers of Light (2013)**

Text: Charles Francis Hall (1821 – 1871), Fridtjof Nansen (1861 – 1930)  
and compilation by the composer after various writings on the Northern Lights.

Gillian Dockins, *mezzo-soprano* • Ethan Moon, *baritone*

Logan Kropp, *jaw harp*

Mezzo solo (Saami or old Finnish folksong): *Northern Lights slide back and forth (similar to fa-la-la..)*

Baritone solo (Northern-Saami joik about Northern Lights): *Northern Lights, Northern Lights,  
blanket shivering green coat (similar to fa-la-la..)*

**Evening (2006)**

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933)  
Marissa Moultrie, *soprano*

**Only in Sleep (2012)**

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933)  
Natalie Breshears, *soprano*

**IV**

**Spring Rain (2017)**

Text: Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933)  
Ally Atwood, *soprano* • Blayne Fujita, *tenor*  
Dalton Rouse and Manuel Tirado, *guitars*

**My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose (2016)**

Text: Robert Burns (1759 – 1796), Scottish Folk Tune  
Rachel Bridges, *mezzo-soprano* • Ethan Wiederspan, *tenor*  
Luke Hartley, *sopranino recorder*

**In My Little Picture Frame (2010)**

Text: Imants Ziedonis (1933 – 2013)  
English translation by Ieva Lešinska – Geiber  
Melody by Renārs Kaupers  
Ally Atwood, *soprano* • Josh Carlisle, *tenor*

**V**

**Amazing Grace (2004)**

Text: John Newton (1725 – 1807), Traditional American Tune  
Julie Landes, *soprano*

**VI**

**Presentation of 2018 Graduating Seniors**

Ally Atwood, Daniel Beal, Elissa Brown, Haley Kim, Alyssa Lyngaas  
Sean Murphy, Dalton Rouse, Nick Stevens, Manuel Tirado

**Beautiful Savior..... arr. F. Melius Christiansen (1871 – 1955)**



**Soprano**

Ally Atwood  
Natalie Breshears  
Elissa Brown  
Gillian Dockins  
Haley Kim  
Julie Landes  
Marissa Moultrie  
Stephanie Pfundt

**Alto**

Lydia Bill  
Rachel Bridges  
Rebekah Dumestre  
Alicia Hoag  
Alyssa Lyngaas  
Morgan Myers  
Emily Shane  
Cat Tyler

**Tenor**

Daniel Beal  
Joshua Carlisle  
Blayne Fujita  
Logan Kropp  
Sean Murphy  
Austin Schend  
Nick Stevens  
Ethan Wiederspan

**Bass**

Ben Axlund  
Brennan Brichoux  
Chris Conway  
Karl Eickhoff  
Luke Hartley  
Brent Johnson  
Ethan Moon  
Dalton Rouse  
Manuel Tirado

## Program Notes

Richard Nance

Latvian composer Ēriks Ešenvalds is one of the most prolific and popular composers of choral music working today. My relationship with Ēriks began in 2012. I attended the 2011 American Choral Directors Association National Conference in Chicago and heard two performances of his wonderful work, *A Drop in the Ocean*, including one performed by the Latvian choir “Kāmer,” which I greatly admire. I decided to make an application to take the Choir of the West to the 2013 National Conference to be held in Dallas, and I wrote to Ēriks to inquire if he might be interested in writing a piece for us to premiere in front of a national audience. Ēriks wrote back right away, saying that he would love to compose a piece for us. We were accepted to perform at the conference, and gave two highly acclaimed performances, which included the new work Ēriks composed for us, *Northern Lights*. Thus began our collaboration and friendship.

In April of 2014, I was on sabbatical and traveled to Sweden, Finland, Latvia and Estonia to meet conductors, composers, and to hear choirs rehearse and perform. While in Riga, I visited Ēriks, and it was then that he proposed we collaborate on two large projects. First, he asked if PLU might do the North American premiere of his *Nordic Light Symphony*, a great multi-media work for choir, orchestra and video, based on the songs and legends about the Aurora Borealis that Ēriks had collected in all the arctic regions. The second project he proposed was to create a new CD of a number of his unaccompanied works based on the poems of American poet Sara Teasdale. This new disc would be released on a highly respected label, and distributed around the world. I jumped at the chance at both projects, and now we have seen both come to fruition. Choir of the West and Choral Union combined with the University Symphony Orchestra to perform the *Nordic Light Symphony* in March of 2017. And from April 3-10 of this year, Ēriks was here on campus along with British audio producer Adrian Peacock to supervise the Choir of the West’s recording of material for the new CD, which will be released worldwide in September on the label Signum Classics.



Since the initial planning stages, the recording has morphed from all-Teasdale to an eclectic mix of primarily unaccompanied works by Ēriks Ešenvalds. We recorded fourteen works, and will perform eleven of those for you this evening. Some of these works are very well known in the choral world, but a number of them are not, and it has been our great pleasure to record some of them for the first time. The six sessions totaled over 12 hours of recording time, and though it was hard work, we found it to be creative, exacting, and yes – fun!

The music you will hear tonight is varied, but it all bears some hallmark Ešenvalds traits – lots of passion and drama, rich harmony, soaring melodies, changing vocal colors, and a few unusual techniques. We will begin with his quasi-medieval setting of the Shakespeare text *O She Doth Teach the Torches To Burn Bright* (the North American premiere of this work), followed by the popular work, *Long Road*, about a loved one taken by death far too soon. Part II

contains two poignant settings about war and its aftermath, *A Soldier’s Mother’s Lullaby* and *There Will Come Soft Rains*. Part III is all about evening, a vivid depiction of the colors of the aurora in the night sky (*Rivers of Light*), the soft sounds of birds on a warm summer night (*Evening*), and dreams of childhood friends (*Only in Sleep*). Part IV contains settings about love, including Teasdale’s passionate poem *Spring Rain* (with guitar accompaniment), Ēriks’ arrangement of the famous Scottish folk song *My Love is Like a Red, Red Rose*, and his adaptation of the Latvian pop song *In My Little Picture Frame*. And we end our Ešenvalds set with his expansive, symphonic version of the great American hymn, *Amazing Grace*.

Producing this recording with Ēriks and Adrian has been a great pleasure and a dream fulfilled. We would like to thank all the donors that have made it possible. I hope you enjoy the concert version this evening, and please look for an announcement when the recording is released in September!