



Una
Voce
chamber choir

“Seeking What is Yet Unfound”

Directed by Virgil Bozeman IV

Saturday, June 15 (7:30pm)

Sunday, June 16 (2:30pm)

Saint Bartholomew’s Episcopal Church

unavocechamberchoir.org

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Friends of Choral Arts:

Welcome to *Seeking What Is Yet Unfound*, the second concert series in the inaugural year of Una Voce Chamber Choir. The Board and performers wish to extend a very hearty "Thank You" to our audience who attended the first concert series in January. The concert was a resounding success and far exceeded our expectations. In the audience we welcomed back many friends from Vox Nova and added many new friends. Despite the January weather more than 175 audience members turned out for each concert for which we are extremely grateful. As a "new" group we greatly appreciate your expression in confidence in us to provide a meaningful, high level choral experience. We'll do our best to keep your confidence with *Seeking What Is Yet Unfound*.



Between January and now we have found businesses who know the importance of a vibrant cultural life on the Midcoast and they are the advertisers in our program. They have committed themselves to helping make this concert and future concerts possible and for Una Voce to grow as we approach our second year. Similar to our audience, some of the advertisers supported choral arts through Vox Nova and have decided to continue their support with Una Voce. Other advertisers are new to us this time and we welcome them heartily to our group. Most of all we hope you will support these businesses and business owners by stopping in to see them because their contributions help to make all of this possible.

We love to sing for you and we thank you again for coming out to see and hear Una Voce and for being part of our success.

Scott B. Miller
Board President, UVCC

MISSION STATEMENT

"UNA VOCE CHAMBER CHOIR is an auditioned chamber choir in mid coast Maine that promotes contemporary choral music by composers from various regions and cultures, including Maine. The Choir offers live concerts in southern and mid coast Maine, reaches underserved areas of the State through audio and visual technology, and provides educational programs to Maine's secondary schools and colleges."

Una
VOCE
chamber choir

Cover artwork courtesy of Burke Long

PROGRAM ORDER

My Spirit Is Uncaged

Paul Rardin (b. 1965)

Drew Albert, Associate Conductor

A Whitman Triptych

David Conte (b. 1955)

I. O Setting Sun

II. What Is the Grass?

III. Facing West

Ryan Newell, Baritone

Drew Albert, Tenor

Frostiana (Seven Country Songs by Robert Frost)

Randall Thompson (1899-1984)

I. The Road Not Taken (SATB Chorus)

II. The Pasture (TBB Chorus)

III. Come In (SAA Chorus)

IV. The Telephone (SAA/TTBB Chorus)

V. A Girl's Garden (SAA Chorus)

VI. Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening (TBB Chorus)

VII. Choose Something Like a Star (SATB Chorus)

The City and the Sea (five settings of poems by e.e. cummings)

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

I. i walked the boulevard

II. the moon is hiding in her hair

III. maggie and milly and molly and may

IV. as is the sea marvelous

V. little man in a hurry

i carry your heart (poem by e.e. cummings)

Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

~ Our performances this weekend are dedicated to the memory of Christopher Hyde who shared in writing the love of music we share in song ~



FOLLOW US ONLINE!

Website:

www.unavocechamberchoir.org

On Facebook:

@Una Voce Chamber Choir



UVCC is a nonprofit organization, and charitable contributions are crucial to our mission of presenting contemporary choral music, and expanding our education and community engagement programs. Please use the envelope included in your program to send us a gift. Thank you!

2019 UNA VOCE CHAMBER CHOIR

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Stephanie Bernier	Ashley Albert	Drew Albert	Ben Baumgarte
Marsey Caswell	Claire Berkowitz	Steve Amsden	Sheldon Bird
Jennifer Caton	Alexis Gillis	Nate Bates	John Gilmour
Caroline Koelker	Jean Edmondson	Robert Gersh	Jeff Hollowell
Erika Leighton	Susan Kring	Robert Haines	Matthew Jones
Denise Meiler	Katie Lauze	Scott Hanson	Aaron Keller
Susan Purcell	Catherine Newell	Jason Paquette	Del Leonard
Hillary Shende	Eileen Stirling		Burke Long
	Karen Topp		Ryan Newell
	Rachel Turner		

Virgil Bozeman IV, Artistic Director
Drew Albert, Assistant Director
Kellie Moody, Accompanist

Interested in joining Una Voce?

The choir holds rolling auditions throughout the year - visit unavocechamberchoir.org and click on "About the Choir" for more information.

2018-19 UNA VOCE CHAMBER CHOIR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Miller, President
Burke Long, Secretary
Sheldon Bird, Treasurer
Lynn Hannings
Susan Purcell
Caroline Koelker
James Caton

2020 Season Schedule

January 25/26

and

June 13/14

Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick



SELECTED PROGRAM NOTES

from Artistic Director Virgil Bozeman

Tell all the truth, but tell it in slant -

Success in Circuit lies

Too bright for our infirm Delight

The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased

With explanation kind

The Truth must dazzle gradually

Or every man be blind -

-Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)



Music...is basically and radically an abstract art...Because it is abstract to start with; it deals directly with the emotions, through a transparent medium of tones which are unrelated to any representational aspects of living. The only "reality" these tones can have is form...One cannot "abstract" musical tones; on the contrary they have to be given their reality through form: up-and-down, long-and-short, loud-and-soft

-Leonard Bernstein (1918-1992), *The Infinite Variety of Music*

The relationship between poetry and music is exceedingly complex. Rhythmic and metric theory in music are the natural outgrowth of prosody, the study and analysis of patterns of rhythm and sound in poetry. Musical and poetic artists seek conceptual, felt insight into aspects of human experience while suggesting truths that lie just beyond our ability to speak, think, or even imagine. Dickinson and especially Bernstein also elucidate a keenly sensed gulf between poetry and music. Dickinson seeks to abstract emotional truth "too bright for our infirm Delight" through language that is fraught with emotion, visual detail, and musical qualities. Bernstein deals directly with emotions by inventing unique sonic forms from infinite numbers of musical possibilities. In essence, the poet aspires to music and the composer aspires to poetry. Each undertakes a tireless quest to achieve insight into the conundrums, imperfections, contradictions, ironies, grandeur and terror of human experience. They employ different media, rich language and transparent tones, and yet they approach those truths that "must dazzle gradually."

The novelist Michael Cunningham, in *Specimen Days*, describes Walt Whitman (1819-1892) as "more like a public utility than a writer...artists in any medium view him as a source of power and sustenance that can be tapped into endlessly." Born on Long Island, Whitman ended his formal education at the age of twelve and continued to teach himself by borrowing books from local libraries. After apprenticing and working as a typesetter, he entered the world of professional journalism, the early career that helped him develop his revolutionary oratorical, free verse style.

David Conte excerpts or adapts three of Whitman's poems, "Song at Sunset", "What is the Grass?", and "Facing West" for his Whitman Triptych. With a taste for unabashedly modal writing, Conte captures the grandeur of Whitman's verse in arioso writing and dominant harmonic structures that generate forward momentum. Open chords impart moments of unease as Whitman's poetry veers from majestic statement to unanswerable query.

In "O Setting Sun" Conte conveys the poet's joy in the "resistless call of myself" through which he discovers something "surely alive" in the fleeting, sublimely beautiful repetitions of nature. The full chorus projects the poem's opening with dramatic rising lines which are passed from lower to higher voices. Each successive voice holds its highest tone, effectively creating stirring harmonies over a sustained dominant pedal in the bass. While the chorus holds the truncated line ("O sun!"), a baritone soloist celebrates the end of day which reveals, rather than obscures, the magnitude, glory, and liveliness of creation ("How the sun, the moon, the stars dart on and on...How the water sings..."). Conte expresses this idea with imitative word painting, polyphony, and mixed meter, but in the end writes chorale-like harmonies and lyrical solo to suggest Whitman's serene realization that "living soul" animates the sturdy continuity of Nature Sublime.

"What is the Grass?" opens with child-like excitement and features compound meter and lyrical melodic material passed urgently between tenor soloist and chorus. Whitman ponders the question philosophically, taking grass as a metaphor for varieties of human experience, even death, which has renewed life hidden within it ("...and even if there was [death in a blade of grass] it led forward."). Conte's music follows this trajectory and sets Whitman's final line to disjunctive melody and dissonant harmonies that suggest lingering uncertainty, yet quiet serenity, in pondering this outcome.

In "Facing West", Whitman imagines a journey westward (highly relevant in 19th century expansionist America), circling the world and returning home, "inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound...pleas'd and joyous," to return home, but disquieted, too: "Where is what I started for so long ago/ And why is it yet unfound.?" Conte word paints, using half cadences, and tonal harmonies that float over dominant pedal tones to capture the drama of Whitman's journey and, with a final pianissimo open chord, its pensive ending ("And why is it yet unfound?")

Long after he had cultivated his persona as a rural philosopher, Robert Frost (1874-1963) published his first collection of poetry. Despite the late start, by the end of his life he had become the most widely read American poet. His poems about country life are simple, but not simplistic. Clear, but deceptively so. They intimate something mysterious that he sees and feels, even longs for, but cannot wholly grasp in bucolic scenes – country walks, cleaning a pasture spring, or lingering near a stand of woods on a snowy night.

Randall Thompson chose seven Frost poems for *Frostiana*, which he completed in 1959. Thompson conducted the premiere himself with his friend Frost in attendance. Rarely have a poet's and composer's artistic inclinations and skills been more suited to each other; each maintained his conservative compositional voice against the modernist trends that dominated art and music during the first half of the 20th century. A master of form and modal counterpoint, Thompson's style and conservative compositional voice perfectly captured the simplicity and rhythmic clarity of Frost's poetry.

Like a Bach cantata, *Frostiana*, is chiasmic in design. The full chorus is heard in the outer and central movements ("The Road Not Taken", "The Telephone", and "Choose Something Like a Star"). Thompson features men's voices in sections two and six, women in movements three and five. "The Road Not Taken", begins with piano in steady low register walking rhythm, like a stroll in the countryside. Unison voices, also low and steady, soon enter, to describe each path separately until, in full harmony, the chorus contemplates the choice presented by these two diverging roads. A lilting piano interlude depicts reverie before the fully textured chorus intimates the mysterious weight of that decision.

In "The Pasture", voices in simple meter give way to a recurring 6/8 piano interlude that is highly reminiscent of a Handelian pastorella. Repeated tones and figures in the upper register imitate the sounds of thrush calls in the poetry of "Come In", while a jaunty accompaniment captures innocent and charming youthful memory of "A Girl's Garden". Thompson suggests haunting quiet of falling snow in "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" with a descending arpeggiated figure in the piano that has a tenuous relationship to the harmonies, as though expressing implicit regret. Tempting as deep and silent woods may be, "I have promises to keep/ And miles to go before I sleep/ And miles to go before I sleep."

In the final movement, "Choose Something Like a Star," Thompson's choral writing is declamatory. With a sustained high soprano line, he suggests the star's distance and aloofness; its rising (alluding to Eremite in Keats's *Bright Star*), with the piano's ascending melodic figure. The stately, dramatic, and hymn-like quality of the fully harmonized chorus captures the poet's longing for anchorage in our tumultuous world, for "a certain height...something like a star to stay our minds on and be staid."

Eric Whitacre has long exhibited an affinity for e.e. cummings. He set ten of his poems, five of which Whitacre chose for *The City and the Sea*. Each typifies the style for which cummings is famous – sparse language, eccentric syntax, wit, irony, and striking insights gleaned from ordinary events such as city walks ("i walked the boulevard"), visits to the beach ("maggie and milly and molly and may"), and moonlit evenings ("the moon is hiding in her hair"). Though unusual for him, Whitacre's musical choices capture the poetry's rhythmic eccentricities, contemplative moments, and sometimes jazzy urgencies. The vocal writing is sparse, rhythmically challenging, and marked

by limited vocal ranges and divisi. He abandons his typical slow-moving and lush sonorities for jazzy rhythms and short phrases that reflect the unusual typography of cummings' poetry (i walked the boulevard, little man in a hurry).

In many respects, the piano is the true star of *The City and the Sea*. Whitacre structures the accompaniments around what he calls "oven mitt" technique: four-finger, white-key tone clusters that he re-imagines as unique, mood setting sound palettes for each poem. The final piece, *little man in a hurry*, is a tour-de-force example of deconstructing poetic language. Whitacre pits opening ostinato, repeated musical figures, in the piano against sung-spoken individual phonemes to achieve dizzying displays of rhythmic counterpoint that lead to "halt, stop, relax, wait". A lyrical middle section follows ("little child who have cried/who has failed who has tried/lie bravely down"), but abruptly, the piano's ostinato returns to accompany mixed meter, layered vocal lines ("big rain, big snow, big sun, big moon") that end with a dissonant "Stop." Perhaps Whitacre suggests the absurdity of anyone coaxing a child with rushing thoughts to sleep.

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Special Thanks

Mid-Coast Presbyterian Church

Tina Davis

XPress Copy

Ed Buonvecchio

Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church

A woman with long dark hair and glasses is lying on her back on a sandy beach. She is wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans. A baby wearing a red hat and a blue and white striped shirt is sitting on her chest, holding her hands. The background shows the ocean and a clear sky.

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