

CHAKRA & CHIME

a choral meditation from the Pacific Crest Trail

featuring *From wilderness*
by Jeffrey Derus (b 1990)
a Pacific Northwest premiere



THE ESOTERICS
Directed by Eric Banks

Saturday | 14 December 2024 | 8:00pm
Plymouth United Church of Christ
1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 15 December 2024 | 7:00pm
Christ Episcopal Church
310 North K Street | Tacoma

CHAKRA & CHIME

a choral meditation from the Pacific Crest Trail

P R O G R A M

Please turn off all noise-making devices, and refrain from talking during the performance.

Please hold our applause until the end of the concert.

The concert lasts about an hour, and there will be no intermission.

From wilderness (2022) by Jeffrey Derus (b 1990)

Root: The survival chakra [bowls only]

Journey into yourself

Sacral: The emotions chakra [bowls only]

Campo
Warner Springs
Cajon Pass
Agua Dolce
Tehachapi Pass
Walker Pass
Kennedy Meadows

Solar plexus: The vitality chakra [bowls only]

Crabtree Meadows
Muir Pass
Tuolumne Meadows
Sonora Pass
Echo Lake

Heart: The love chakra [bowls only]

Donner Summit
Belden
McArthur-Burney Falls State Park
Castle Crag
Etna Summit
Seiad Valley

Throat: The creativity chakra [bowls only]

Crater Lake¹
Mount Thielsen Wilderness²
Diamond Peak Wilderness³
Mount Washington Wilderness⁴
Mount Jefferson Wilderness⁵
Mount Hood Wilderness¹²³⁵
Cascade Locks

Third eye: The intuition chakra [bowls only]

White Pass
Snoqualmie Pass
Stevens Pass

Crown: The cosmic chakra [bowls only]

Rainy Pass
Manning Park

THE ESOTERICS

Eric Banks *Founding director*

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Patrick Clark

Peter Vossall

Phil Edry³

Sarah Haynes

Tristain Lukey

** denotes choral soloists*

Cello:

Paige Stockley

Crystal singing bowls:

Ally King

Amy Korver

Daniel Dolzhansky

Elaine Cox

Gustavo Elias

Leigh McGill

Mary Weineke

Penny Cramer

Singing bowls provided by Johnaye Kendrick

Special thanks to:

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Lillian Ashworth | *Publicity Coordinator*

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T H E E S O T E R I C S

Now at the start of its fourth decade, Seattle's most innovative chorus has drawn local, national, and international praise for performing rarely-heard compositions of contemporary music for unaccompanied voices, for infusing elements of the literary, theatrical, and visual arts into the typical concert experience, and for inspiring and performing new *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings by composers around the world. In early 1992, Eric Banks brought together a group of friends to perform his Master's and Doctoral recitals in Choral Studies at the University of Washington. After Banks' recitals were completed, the group wanted to keep singing together, so Banks chose a name for his ensemble based on the Greek adjective **εσωτερικος** – which describes a close-knit community and the secret knowledge that its members share. Since incorporating with this name in 1993, The Esoterics has performed hundreds of concerts throughout the Pacific Northwest, has commissioned and premiered hundreds of new works for *a cappella* voices in myriad languages, and has mastered many of the most virtuosic choral works of the last century in concerts described as “compelling,” “crafted,” “luxuriant,” “lyrical,” “sumptuous,” and “superb.” The Esoterics has released twenty-one CD recordings on its own label (Terpsichore) and has been honored to compete at the 2000 Cork International Choral Festival (Ireland), the 2001 Certamen Coral de Tolosa (Spain), and the 2006 Harald Andersén International Choir Competition in Helsinki (Finland). As well, The Esoterics has demonstrated its continuing commitment to choral education in becoming the only choral ensemble in Washington State that grants continuing-education credit to its members who also teach in the public schools. In recognition for its efforts in choral education and innovation, The Esoterics has been honored five times with the ASCAP and Chorus America Award for the Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music (in 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2017). The Esoterics has been honored to receive grants from the arts commissions of Washington State, King County, and the City of Seattle, as well as funding from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, the Seattle Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the BMI Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Esoterics is a proud member chorus of ACDA (the American Choral Directors Association), Chorus America, IFCM (the International Federation for Choral Music), and GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses).

M I S S I O N S T A T E M E N T

The Esoterics is a Seattle-based vocal ensemble that is dedicated to performing and perpetuating contemporary *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings from around the world.

While cultivating artistic expression and cultural understanding among its singers and audience alike, The Esoterics aspires to reflect the beauty, power, and significance that are inherent in the music of our time.

E R I C B A N K S

Conductor, composer, clinician, vocalist, linguist, and ethnomusicologist, Eric Banks has garnered significant acclaim as one of the most creative and compelling choral directors in the United States for his unwavering commitment to new music for unaccompanied voices. In 1992, Eric founded The Esoterics, a professional-caliber chamber chorus in Seattle whose mission is to perform and perpetuate contemporary choral music beyond the scope of the established *a cappella* canon. After completing his BA in Composition at Yale University in 1990, Eric relocated to Seattle to study in the departments of Choral Studies and Music Theory at the University of Washington. His MM thesis (1992) is a performance edition of *Dixit Dominus* by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani; his MA thesis (1995) is a postmodern analysis of Arvo Pärt's *Credo*; and his DMA dissertation (1996) surveys the choral music of Mexican composer and Aztec ethnomusicologist Carlos Chávez. In 1997, at the conclusion of his graduate study, Banks traveled to Sweden as a Fulbright Scholar and Lois Roth Fellow in order to learn more about its contemporary choral culture. While in Stockholm, Eric performed with several ensembles, including the Swedish Radio Choir and the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir. In his music, Eric is drawn to ideas that are ‘esoteric’ in origin, and chooses to express concepts that are undiscovered, under-represented, or not easily decipherable to a wider audience. As a composer, Banks has been able to combine his love of poetry, foreign language, classical civilization, social justice, comparative religion, and the natural sciences to create a growing repertoire of new works for *a cappella* chorus. Several of Banks' commissioned works have been recorded by The Esoterics, and can be found on CDs released on the Terpsichore label. Eric was a visiting scholar at the Royal Conservatory of Music and Swedish National Radio in Stockholm, as well as at the Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai, India. Winner of the 2010 *Dale Warland Singers Commission Award* from Chorus America and the American Composers Forum, Eric has received composition and research grants from 4Culture, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Artist Trust, the Atwood Foundation, New Music USA, the San Francisco Arts Commission, Seattle CityArtists, the Washington State Arts Commission, and three “creativity” grants the National Endowment for the Arts. His upcoming premieres include pieces for Cantori New York, the Taipei Philharmonic Chorus, and the Vancouver Chamber Choir. Eric lives in Seattle with David Gellman, his husband of 27 years (also The Esoterics' graphic design guru). You can read more about Eric's work on his own webpage: www.ericbanks.com. Eric is a member of ASCAP.

J E F F R E Y D E R U S

Jeffrey Derus is an award-winning American composer and producer. His music has gained a worldwide presence with commissions and performances from ensembles such as Choral Arts Initiative, the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers, Constellation Men's Ensemble, Inversion Ensemble, the Young New Yorkers' Chorus, KC VITAS, INSPIRARE, the Nova Scotia Choral Federation, Temple University, Vanguard University, as well as other universities around the world. Hailed as "powerful, dramatic, lucid" (*Sonograma Magazine*) and "elegant" (*Voice of OC*), his music is "akin to that of Holy Minimalism" (*AllMusic*).

Derus' premiere concert work, *From wilderness: A meditation on the Pacific Crest Trail*, captures the transformative experience of traveling the Pacific Crest Trail. *From wilderness* made its commercial debut in April 2022 with Director Brandon Elliott and Choral Arts Initiative along with cellist Kevin Mills. It ranked #3 on the Billboard Charts (Traditional Classical Albums), #2 Best Seller on iTunes Classical Charts, and #1 New Release Opera/Vocal Albums on Amazon. In 2023, Derus received two Gold Medals from the Global Music Awards for his work *From wilderness*; for Creativity and Originality. *From wilderness* recently placed 2nd in Major Choral Works for The American Prize Pro Division. *From wilderness* has been praised for its "fascinating and multifaceted sound world" (*CD Hotlist*). "It just doesn't get much better than this" (*Take Effect Reviews*).

Jeffrey is the winner of the 2023 ACDA Brock Prize for Professional Composers for his piece *I will go*. He is also a recipient of the Britten-Pears and Holst Foundation residency in Aldeburgh, UK. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education from California State University, Fullerton and a Master of Arts degree in Education and Curriculum Design from Brandman University. Jeffrey is a member of the American Choral Directors Association, Chorus America, and the Recording Academy.

As a founding board member and choral artist of Choral Arts Initiative; he is called to perform new choral works and compose "music with pros he can proudly rub elbows with" (*Midwest Records*). Published by Caribbean Blue Publishing, Derus' music is also available at Graphite and Pavane.

You can discover more about Jeffrey's work at www.jeffreyderus.com.

U P C O M I N G E S O T E R I C A

Please mark your calendars! Our concert weekends in Seattle and Tacoma are set for 2025. Season 32 is on its way!

THE MUSIC OF MICHAEL OSTRZYGA

Saturday | 8 March 2025 at 8:00pm | Plymouth United Church of Christ | 1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 9 March 2025 at 7:00pm | Christ Episcopal Church | 310 North K Street | Tacoma

THE MUSIC OF MARTHA SULLIVAN

Saturday | 17 May 2025 | Plymouth United Church of Christ | 1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 18 May 2025 | Christ Episcopal Church | 310 North K Street | Tacoma

THE MUSIC OF JUHI BANSAL

Saturday | 11 October 2025 | Plymouth United Church of Christ | 1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 12 October 2025 | Christ Episcopal Church | 310 North K Street | Tacoma

THE MUSIC OF ANDRÉ VIDAL

Saturday | 13 December 2025 | Plymouth United Church of Christ | 1217 6th Avenue | Seattle

Sunday | 14 December 2025 | Christ Episcopal Church | 310 North K Street | Tacoma

Texts & translations

From wilderness (2022)

A meditation on the Pacific Crest Trail

Composed by Jeffrey Derus (b 1990)

All texts have been adapted by the composer

Root: The survival chakra

Journey into yourself

And you?
When will you begin
That long journey into yourself?

- from *Journey into yourself*,
by Jalal al-Din Rumi

Sacral: The emotions chakra

Southern California

Campo

I come upon it suddenly, alone –
A little pathway winding in the weeds
That fringe the roadside;
And with dreams my own,
I wander as it leads.

- from *A country pathway*,
by James Whitcomb Riley

Warner Springs

Over the graying desert
Broods the sky.
Clouds drift – sands shift –
Night winds sigh.
Through the hush and stillness
Silver shadows fly,
Sings and passes by.

- from *The singing sands*,
by Lucy Eddy

Cajon Pass

Hail solitary star!
That shines from thy far blue height,
And overlook Earth
And Heaven, companionless in light!

- from *To a star seen at twilight*,
by John Rollin Ridge

Agua Dolce

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars – on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

- from *Desert places*,
by Robert Frost

Tehachapi Pass

Remember
This land does not belong to you,
It is you who belongs to this land.

- author unknown

Walker Pass

The wind said
Wayfaring and wandering
Is not for mortals...

- from *Joshua Tree*,
by AR Ammons

Kennedy Meadows

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And a heaven in a wildflower.

- from *Auguries of innocence*,
by William Blake

Solar Plexus: The vitality chakra

The Sierras

Crabtree Meadows

Night stands in the valley.
Her head is bound with stars,
While dawn steals through the silent trees.

- from *Mountain trails*,
by Marjorie Allen Seiffert

Muir Pass

Behind the mountains
Morning shouts and sings
And dances upward.

- from *Mountain trails*,
by Marjorie Allen Seiffert

Tuolumne Meadows

"How glorious a greeting
The sun gives the mountains!
To behold this alone
Is worth the pain of any excursion
A thousand times over."

- a quote by John Muir

Sonora Pass

Over me the wind swirls.
I have stood on your portal and I know.
You are further than this,
Still further on another cliff.

- from *The cliff temple*,
by Hilda Doolittle

Echo Lake

This hidden lake is a sapphire cup.
An offering clearer than wine, colder than tears.
The mountains hold it toward the sky in silence.

- from *Mountain trails*,
by Marjorie Allen Seiffert

Heart: The love chakra

Northern California

Donner Summit

I follow the narrow cliffside trail
Halfway up the mountain...
Above the deep canyon.

- from *The deer lay down their bones*,
by Robinson Jeffers

Belden

The leaves hang still...
The hurrying centers of the storm unite,
From heaven's height, the wild white flash...
The pealing thunder crash,
Then comes the rain...
Column in column.

- from *A thunderstorm*,
by Archibald Lampman

McArthur-Burney Falls State Park

"A few minutes ago,
Every tree was excited...
Bowing, waving, swirling, and topping their branches...
To the roaring storm."

- a quote by John Muir

Castle Crag

"But though to the outer ear
These trees are now silent,
Their songs never cease."

- a quote by John Muir

Etna Summit

Rich music breathes in Summer's every sound;
And in her harmony of woods, meadows, all around...

- from *Summer images*,
by John Clare

Seiad Valley

I wonder if anyone else has an ear
So tuned and sharpened as I have,
To detect the music, not of spheres, but of Earth...?

- a quote by Kate Chopin

Throat: The creativity chakra

Oregon

Crater Lake

लँ Lam...

There is a wolf in me...
Fangs pointed, tongue red...
I keep this wolf
Because the wilderness gave it to me,
And the wilderness will not let it go.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Mount Thielsen Wilderness

वं Vam...

There is a fox in me...
A silver-grey fox...
I circle and loop and double-cross
I got this too from the wilderness,
And the wilderness will not let it go.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Diamond Peak Wilderness

रँ Ram...

There is a fish in me...
It swims in the rivers and streams of my hopes...
It came from salt-blue water-gates, before land was...
I got the fish from the wilderness,
And the wilderness will not let it go.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Mount Washington Wilderness

यँ Yam...

There is an eagle in me...
The eagle flies among the mountains of my dreams...
I keep the eagle...
Because the wilderness says so.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Mount Jefferson Wilderness

हँ Ham...

There is a mockingbird in me...
It warbles over the foothills of my wishes...
I got the mockingbird from the wilderness,
And the wilderness will not let it go.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Mount Hood Wilderness

O! There is a menagerie,
Inside my ribs,
Under my head,
Under my heart –
And something else...

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Cascade Locks

For I am the keeper of the menagerie,
I say yes and no,
I sing and work and kill.
I came from the wilderness.

- from *Wilderness*,
by Carl Sandburg

Third eye: The intuition chakra

Washington

White Pass

I had a dream,
Which was not all a dream.

- from *Darkness*,
by George Gordon (Lord) Byron

Snoqualmie Pass

I wandered lonely as a cloud...
Beside the lake, beneath the trees.

- from *I wandered lonely as a cloud*,
by William Wordsworth

Stevens Pass

A silver ray of sun
Pierced the heavy shade.
It called me out into the dawn,
From wilderness I was made.

- from *From wilderness*,
by Matthew Derus

Crown: The cosmic chakra

Rainy Pass

Walk.
Walk as the mountain, the earth, the wind.
Walk as the trees, their leaves, the flowers.
Walk as the sun, its rays, its warmth.

- from *Walk*,
by Nora Ghassan Abdullatif

British Columbia

Manning Park

Walk as a heart wide open, vibrating in love and trust.
Walk as pure love, emanating from the universe.
Walk a presence, a present to existence.
Walk.

- from *Walk*,
by Nora Ghassan Abdullatif

लँ Lam...

[root
survival
stability]

वं Vam...

[sacral
emotions
pleasure]

रँ Ram...

[solar plexus
vitality
confidence]

यँ Yam...

[heart
love
compassion]

हँ Ham...

[throat
creativity
communication]

क्षँ Ksham...

[third eye
intuition
intelligence]

ॐ Om...

[crown
cosmic
awareness]

- the seven chakra seed syllables,
with each of their corporeal associations
and their mantras of attribution

THE ESOTERICS

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If you would like to receive information about future concerts, or are interested in volunteering, please contact us:

The Esoterics | 1815 24th Avenue
Seattle WA 98122-3014 | 206.551.1379
info@TheEsoterics.org

The Esoterics would like to acknowledge our generous rehearsal and concert venues, as well as their staff, for their contributions to The Esoterics' success this year:

Pastor Annie Grogan and Cheri Bowles at Queen Anne Christian Church in Seattle
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To all of you who have given so generously, The Esoterics extends its warmest thanks.

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