



# Across the Vast Eternal Sky

The Music of Ola Gjeilo

FEATURING

## THE GENESEE CHORALE

Ric Jones, Director

Janine Fagnan, Associate Conductor

Doug Hanson, Accompanist

## THE GREYCLIFFE STRING QUARTET

Jessica Tufte, Violin

Paul-Joseph Struckmann, Violin

Amy Kelly, Viola

Andrew Borkowski, Violoncello

HANNAH SCHUETZ, OBOE

Friday, May 19, 2023

7pm

Grace Baptist Church

238 Vine St

Batavia, NY 14020

Sunday, May 21, 2023

4pm

St. Mark's Episcopal Church

1 E Main St.

Le Roy, NY 14482

## ~ Ola Gjeilo ~



**Ola Gjeilo** is one of the most frequently performed composers in the choral world. An accomplished pianist, improvisations over his own published choral pieces have become a trademark of his collaborations. Although Norwegian by birth, it is perhaps Ola's adopted country of America that has influenced the composer's distinctive

soundworld the most, evolving a style that is often described as cinematic and evocative, with a lush, harmonious sound.

Ola grew up in a musically eclectic home listening to classical, jazz, pop and folk, a broad background he later incorporated into his classical composition studies at The Juilliard School, the Royal College of Music in London, and currently as a New York City-based freelance composer. He is especially inspired by the improvisational art of film composer Thomas Newman, jazz legends Keith Jarrett and Pat Metheny, glass artist Dale Chihuly and architect Frank Gehry.

Ola is an exclusive Decca Classics artist, and his Decca albums include *Ola Gjeilo* and *Winter Songs*, also featuring Tenebrae, Voces8 and the Choir of Royal Holloway, as well as the solo piano albums *Night & Dawn*. The recordings are available on Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon, and all major platforms. He is currently composer-in-residence with DCINY.

Ola's music is published by Walton Music (choral), Boosey & Hawkes (wind band), and Chester Music (piano). For more information, please visit [olagjeilo.com](http://olagjeilo.com), or find Ola on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

## ~ The Genesee Chorale ~

The Genesee Chorale was organized in the fall of 1971 under the direction of Dr. Theodore Ashizawa. Dr. Ashizawa led the Chorale for 20 years. Dawn Mark conducted the group for four seasons, followed by Ron Bordinaro, Marcia Housel (for dinner dances), Mark Hoerbelt from January 2000 to 2005 and then Charles Bradley for two seasons. Ric Jones has been the director since January of 2008.

The Chorale is comprised of singers from all walks of life and draws membership from Genesee County and seven additional counties.

The repertory of the Genesee Chorale encompasses a wide variety of music in various styles from motets and madrigals of the Renaissance, to folk, musicals, and jazz. Over the years, the Chorale has championed contemporary works for choir as well as larger liturgical settings including Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, Charpentier's *Midnight Mass for Christmas*, the Mozart and Brahms *Requiems*, and several masses by composers such as Schubert and Mozart. Additionally, the Chorale has performed *Die Fledermaus*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Solomon*, Haydn's *Creation*, Vivaldi's *Magnificat*, and Vaughan William's *Hodie*.

In recent years, the Genesee Chorale has performed Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Kilbourn Hall at the Eastman School of Music, Dan Forrest's *Requiem for the Living* with the Brighton Symphony Orchestra, as well as commissioned two new works, *The Waking* and *Letchworth Suite* from composer Daniel Baldwin.

## ~ Ric Jones ~

Ric Jones is the founder and partner of Imagine Music Publishing LLC, a publishing company that sells original instrumental and vocal music, arrangements, commissioned works, as well as educational and curricular materials.

Ric received both his Bachelor and Master Degrees in Music Education from Ithaca College.

Currently, Ric serves as the Music Director of the Middleport Community Choir, Music Director of the Genesee Chorale, and Music Director of the Brighton Symphony Orchestra. He is also the organist and Music Director at St. Peter Lutheran Church in Medina, and organist at Trinity Lutheran Church in Wolcottsville.

His educational experience includes directing high school bands, marching bands, pep bands, and chamber ensembles at Corinth High School, Cincinnatus High School; as well, Jones assisted and composed for a variety of marching bands.

Ric resides in Medina with his wife Karen, and is the proud Dad of three young men, Nicholas, Ryder, and River.

## ~ Janine Fagnan ~

Janine Fagnan received both Bachelor of Music Education and Vocal Performance degrees from Bluffton University. She taught music and directed five musical groups at Dock Academy in Pennsylvania. Presently, Janine continues to maintain a private music studio.

Janine has sung with the choir since 2012, served on the Board since 2014, and was President from 2019 to 2023. She has been Associate Conductor since 2022.

## ~ Doug Hanson ~

Doug Hanson became the accompanist for the Genesee Chorale in September 2014.

He received his Bachelor of Music from University of Nebraska at Lincoln and his Master of Arts in Music from the University of Connecticut at Storrs. Doug also has a Master of Music in Piano Performance from the Eastman School of Music as well as a Master of Science in Computer Science from the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Doug served as organist and choir accompanist for the Union Church of Churchville before becoming the ECMS Adult Choir accompanist for two years at the prestigious Eastman School of Music. He later became the organist of the Lutheran Church of Peace, and was the chorus accompanist for the Red Creek School System in Wayne County.

## ~ The Greycliffe String Quartet ~

### **Jessica Tufte , Violin**

Jessica Tufte is a Buffalo-based freelance violinist. She currently performs regularly in various chamber groups and the Orchard Park and Southern Tier Symphonies. Previously, Jessica has held seats with the Durham Symphony Orchestra, the National Institutes of Health Philharmonia, was concertmaster for the UB Symphony, and performed as a soloist with the NIH Community Orchestra. She has also played in multiple professional tango orchestras and spent three years in central North Carolina gigging with a bluegrass band. In addition to her time spent performing, Jessica is passionate about using music for social change. She was a member of the 2020 cohort of the Global Leaders Program; the executive certificate program that preceded the current MBA for the Arts run by the Global Leaders Institute. During this program, she spent three weeks in Chile working with local youth orchestras. From 2017-2020, she worked as a Teaching Artist for Buffalo String Works whose mission is to ignite personal and community lead-

ership through accessible, youth-centered music education. She is especially grateful to all of the people who've drawn her into music in new ways again and again, including some of her own teachers and coaches: Marcella Wentland, Douglas Shaw, Jonathan Golove, and Dr. David Leung.

### **Paul-Joseph Struckmann, Violin**

Paul-Joseph Struckmann has been an orchestra teacher since 2000 and is a founding member of the Greycliffe String Quartet which was established as a business in 2010. He has performed with the Southern Tier Symphony, the Genesee Symphony, and the Buffalo Tango Orkestra to name a few performing groups. He has also performed as a soloist with the Middleport Community Choir, the Genesee Chorale, and many weddings over the years. He is also a church musician and choir director for his home congregation of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lockport. In addition to his performing and public teaching, he has a private lesson studio that is made up mostly of homeschooled students. He currently resides in West Seneca, with his wife Alicia and 1 year old daughter Elanorah.

### **Amy Kelly , Viola**

Amy Kelly began her studies on violin with the Suzuki Method at the age of 7. After receiving a BA and MA in Russian Studies from Colgate and Georgetown Universities, Amy spent almost a decade living and working in Moscow, Russia. After returning to the Buffalo area, she re-kindled her love of music, teaching at home and playing in area orchestras. Amy has been a Teaching Artist with Buffalo String Work since 2017. She plays regularly with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Buffalo Opera United, the Western New York Chamber Orchestra, Southern Tier Symphony, I Solisti of WNY, and many other local groups. She is also passionate about chamber music and has travelled the globe to attend workshops.

### **Andrew Borkowski , Violoncello**

Cellist Andrew Borkowski has performed regularly as a soloist/chamber musician and with orchestras both nationally and internationally. He has played in masterclasses for cellists including Fred Sherry, Eric Bartlett, and Zuill Bailey, and his principal teachers include Jonathan Golove, Marcy Rosen, and Peter Wiley. He was Artistic Director of the Historic Hudson Chamber Music Series from 2016-18, designing and performing

programs set in historical landmark buildings throughout the Hudson Valley, as well as the Artistic Director and co-founder of Innovox Contemporary Ensemble, a pierrot + percussion ensemble premiering the works of living, NYC-based composers. Also having played in numerous musical theatre productions, he appeared in NBC's live broadcast of Jesus Christ Superstar with John Legend, Sara Barielles, and Alice Cooper, recording an album that was also nominated for a Grammy. He is currently the Director of Education for Buffalo String Works, and plays a 1920 Marc Laberte cello made in Mirecourt, France.

## ~ Hannah Schuetz ~

Oboist Hannah Schuetz is an early childhood teacher in Brighton. She is a graduate of Nazareth College's music department and also plays with Brockport Symphony Orchestra.

## ~ The Genesee Chorale ~

### **SOPRANO**

Dorothy Carrigan  
Marsha Coy  
Ruth Doyle  
Joan Ellison  
Alice Fedrigo  
Barb Galliford  
Merry Lou Holley  
Janus Mary Jones  
Patricia Malone  
Diane Ohlson  
Jessie Pierce  
Pamm Seifert  
Rachel Sovocool\*  
Caryn Wood\*

### **ALTO**

Sara Balbi  
Marie Barcomb  
Lindsay Edwards\*  
Marianne Garigen\*  
Julie Graham  
Karen Jones  
Amanda Konopa  
Amy Perl  
Michele Spoto

### **TENOR**

Alan Barcomb  
Janine Fagnan\*  
Lori Johnson  
Keith Konopa  
Robin Lewis  
Eric Wood\*  
  
**BASS**  
Ron DeFazio  
Jim Ellison  
George Graham\*  
Charles Herman  
Darrel Oakes  
Duane Scarborough

\* Board Member

# **Join the Genesee Chorale**

New members are *ALWAYS* welcome!

Choir membership is open to anyone interested in singing and joining in the comradery that we share through music.

Join us for our Fall season starting  
September 11, 2023 7:00PM to 9:00PM  
St. James Episcopal Church  
405 East Main Street, Batavia, NY 14020

**Our performance repertoire consists of a variety of mediums, including major classical works, sacred, secular, Broadway, and contemporary choral works.**

## **For more information:**

Follow us on FACEBOOK!  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneseeChoraleInc>

Email: [info@geneseechorale.com](mailto:info@geneseechorale.com)

Website: [GeneseeChorale.com](http://GeneseeChorale.com)

Phone: 585.250.5483

~ Program ~

**Across the Vast Eternal Sky**

*The Music of Ola Gjeilo*

The Genesee Chorale  
The Greycliffe String Quartet  
Hannah Schuetz, Oboe  
Jessica Pierce, Soprano

**Dark Night of the Soul**

**Across the Vast Eternal Sky**

**Tundra**

**The Ground**

**Ubi Caritas**

*Brief intermission*

**The Rose**

**Lux Beata Trinitas**

**Iam Sol Recedit**

**Luminous Night of the Soul**

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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There are many people who assisted in the production of this program to whom a note of appreciation is extended:

*GoArt!* - For your continual support of The Genesee Chorale and all culture in Genesee and Orleans counties. Without your support, our 52 years of bringing choral music to Batavia and surrounding communities would not be possible.

*Greycliffe String Quartet* - Your time and talents add so much to our performance.

*St. James Episcopal Church* - The Genesee Chorale is proud to call St. James Episcopal Church in Batavia, NY our home. For more information about St. James, please visit their website at [stjamesbatavia.org](http://stjamesbatavia.org). Thank you for your continued support, generosity, and assistance.

*Hannah Schuetz* - Thank you for graciously giving your time and talents to help bring our music to life.

*Grace Baptist Church and St. Mark's Episcopal Church* - Thank you for opening your doors to us and generously allowing us to perform in your beautiful sanctuaries.

*Genesee Chorale Board of Directors* - For their time commitments and incredible dedication to our organization.

*Merry Lou Holley & Nancy Hoag* - Thank you for keeping our music organized and our folders full!



This program is made possible with funds from the Statewide Community Regrant program, a regrant program of the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the

Governor and the New York State Legislature and administered by the Genesee-Orleans Regional Arts Council.

## ~ Program Notes ~

### Dark Night of the Soul

Gjeilo's *Dark Night of the Soul* and *Luminous Night of the Soul* were conceived as two movements of the same work. *Dark Night of the Soul* was premiered by the Phoenix Chorale in 2010 with the composer at the keyboard and dedicated to publisher Gunilla Luboff in memory of her husband, choral legend Norman Luboff. The original poem by 16th-century Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross, overflows with anticipation and ends with joy as the soul escapes its mortal body to join with God. Here the soul ventures out of its "house" into the dark night, secretly, feeling no fear and guided in its journey by the blazing light of love. Yes, the night is dark and full of hardships, but faith leads the soul safely through all of them to a union with God. Our first and last pieces that we will perform reflect the two parts of the original poem: "Dark Night" represents the soul's journey, while "Luminous Night" reveals the soul's fulfillment.

The composer's goal in this piece is to make the choir and piano more equal. Throughout the work, there is much give and take between the choir and the piano; sometimes the piano accompanies the choir, other times, the choir accompanies the piano taking on the role of a string orchestra in combination with the string quartet. Hints of minimalism are evident in the choral parts where slight changes in chord tones in selected voices create shimmering dissonances. Gjeilo writes that the combination of voices and strings evokes warmth and a sound that feels more organic and alive. The composer desires to "convey a lot of the grace and passion that is so strong and pulsating in the poem!"

*One dark night,  
fired with love's urgent longings  
– ah, the sheer grace! –  
I went out unseen,  
my house being now all stilled.*

*In darkness, and secure,  
by the secret ladder, disguised,  
– ah, the sheer grace! –  
in darkness and concealment,  
my house being now all stilled.*

*On that glad night,  
in secret, for no one saw me,  
nor did I look at anything,  
with no other light or guide  
than the one that burned in my heart.*

## **Across the Vast Eternal Sky**

When Ola first approached me about a text for this piece we discussed several premises, including beginning with the last line of a previous collaboration, 'Tundra'. The line "Across the vast, eternal sky," was the starting point of a discussion which eventually came around to the idea of a phoenix, a twist on the theme of rebirth (and the subject of other collaborations with Ola). The legend of the firebird offered creative opportunities to explore the themes of spiritual growth and renewal. It is interesting how a piece of music takes shape, especially one which is the product of dynamic collaboration. Ola shared with me some early musical material with which he was already experimenting, and I began to write a lyric to match what he had given me. The current opening words and subsequent reprise were originally the bridge section of a slightly larger work of five different stanzas to match three distinct melodic themes. Later, the musical material containing the first two stanzas were cut from the final version – this shaping and reshaping of a work is an exciting and vital part of the collaborative process. Perhaps, like the phoenix, that lost material will be reborn as part of another work.

- Charles Anthony Silvestri

*Sunlight shines on my face;  
This is my grace,  
to be Restored,  
born again, In flame!*

*When I was young I flew in the velvet night;  
Shining by day, a firebird bathed in light!  
Grey now my feathers, which once were red and gold;  
My destiny to soar up to the sunlight!*

*Do not despair that I am gone away;  
I will appear again  
When the sunset paints  
Flames across the vast eternal sky!*

## Tundra

The lyrics for *Tundra* were written by Charles Anthony Silvestri, specifically for this work. I asked him to write a text based on the title, and some photos of a part of my native Norway that is very dear to me; the Hardangervidda mountain plateau. It's pretty close to where my father grew up, a ski resort town called Geilo in the mountains between Oslo and Bergen. This area is quite barren, and intensely beautiful. It is easy to feel that you are treading on sacred land, which Tony so wonderfully expresses in his text. *Tundra* (2010) was commissioned by and dedicated to the ACDA Women's R&S Commissioning Consortium/Debra Spurgeon, National Chair.

- Ola Gjeilo

*Wide, worn and weathered,  
Sacred expanse  
Of green and white and granite grey;  
Snowy patches strewn,  
Anchored to the craggy earth,  
Unmoving;  
While clouds dance  
Across the vast, eternal sky.*

## The Ground

"The Ground" from Sunrise Mass was written for choir and string quartet. The text, from the Gloria, a hymn of praise, is set to upward, arching motives in the vocal and piano parts, with the strings primarily doubling the voices. *Dona nobis pacem*, "Grant us peace," closes out the quiet conclusion.

*Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua.* / Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

*Osana in excelsis.* / Hosanna in the highest.

*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domina.* / Blessed is he who comes in the  
name of the Lord.

*Benedictus qui venit. Osana in excelsis.* / Blessed is he who comes. Hosanna  
in the highest.

*Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi.* / Lamb of God, Who take away the sins  
of the world.

*Dona nobis pacem.* / Grant us peace.

## Ubi Caritas

Gjeilo composed *Ubi Caritas* in 1999, after singing, and being influenced, by Maurice Duruflé's a cappella work for choir with the same name. Gjeilo takes inspiration from the traditional chant that Duruflé also used, but then added his own twist to the text to make it come alive in a different way.

The text, which is related to the Eucharist, is widely known as the antiphon for the first communion, and the washing of the feet from the Mass for Maundy Thursday. Gjeilo states that the work is comprised entirely of original material, but the music is very reflective of Gregorian chant tradition, which in turn "pays homage to the text's ancient history."

*Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.* / Where charity and love are, God is there.  
*Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.* / Christ's love has gathered us into  
one.

*Exultemus, et in ipso incundemur.* / Let us rejoice and be pleased in Him.  
*Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.* / Let us fear, and let us love the living  
God.

*Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.* / And may we love each other with a sincere heart.

## The Rose

Christina's Rossetti's mysterious poem is wrapped in a soundscape of smoothly soaring vocal lines that are supported with an undulating piano accompaniment and string quartet.

*The lily has a smooth stalk,  
Will never hurt your hand;  
But the rose upon her brier  
Is lady of the land.*

*There's sweetness in an apple tree,  
And profit in the corn;  
But lady of all beauty  
Is a rose upon a thorn.*

*When with moss and honey  
She tips her bending brier,  
And half unfolds her glowing heart,  
She sets the world on fire.*

## **Lux Beata Trinitas & Iam Sol Recedit**

*Lux Beata Trinitas* and *Iam Sol Recedit* were written as a pair starting with *Lux Beata Trinitas*. Along with the musical flow between the two and the instrumentation, the pieces are connected through their texts. While often attributed to St. Ambrose of Milan, the *Lux Beata Trinitas* text is now believed to be the work of an unknown author, and the words of *Iam Sol Recedit* were later derived from it.

With these two works, I wanted to write something hopeful and peaceful, and to incorporate one of my favorite instruments, the oboe.

- Ola Gjeilo

### **Lux Beata Trinitas**

*O lux beata Trinitas / O Trinity, blessed light,  
Et principalis unitas / And unity, foremost in might,  
Iam sol recedat igneus / Now the fiery sun has withdrawn,  
Infunde lumen cordibus / Pour your light into our hearts.*

*Te mane laudum carmine / In the morning, with our song of praise,  
Te deprecemur vespere: / And in the evening let us send up our prayer;  
Te nostra supplex Gloria / As suppliants we hymn your glory  
Per cuncta laudet saecula / Throughout all the ages.*

*Amen. / Amen.*

### **Iam Sol Recedit**

*Iam sol recedit igneus: / As fades the glowing orb of day,  
Tu lux perennis Unitas. / to Thee, great source of light, we pray.*

*Patri, simulque Filio, / To God the Father, and the Son,  
tibi que sancte Spiritus, / and Holy Spirit, Three in One,  
sicut fuit, sit iugiter / be endless glory, as before  
saeclum per omne gloria. / the world began, so evermore.  
Te mane laudum carmine, / At early dawn, at close of day,  
Te deprecamur vespere. / to Thee our vows we humbly pay.*

*Amen. / Amen.*

## Luminous Night of the Soul

*Luminous Night of the Soul* is the sequel to *Dark Night of the Soul*. The link between the two pieces is a theme that is featured towards the end of both, in very different ways; while the end of *Dark Night* is lyrical and romantic, the finale of *Luminous Night* is exuberant and relentless. While the first piece we performed, *Dark night* represented the soul's journey, this final piece reveals the soul's fulfillment.

*Luminous Night* is set to words by Charles Anthony Silvestri, plus a stanza from St. John of the Cross' poem *Dark Night of the Soul*. It has a brighter, sunnier atmosphere than its predecessor, but with both, Gjeilo features the piano heavily as an equal partner to the choir and unified by the string quartet sound.

*Long before music was sung by a choir,  
Long before silver was shaped in the fire,  
Long before poets inspired the heart,  
You were the Spirit of all that is art.*

*You give the potter the feel of the clay;  
You give the actor the right part to play;  
You give the author a story to tell;  
You are the prayer in the sound of a bell.*

*Praise to all lovers who feel your desire!  
Praise to all music which soars to inspire!  
Praise to the wonders of Thy artistry  
Our Divine Spirit, all glory to Thee.*

*Luminous Night of the Soul,*

*O guiding night!  
O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united  
The Lover with his beloved,  
Transforming the beloved in her Lover.*

*Luminous Night of the Soul.*