

How to Survive Uinter

Mid-Columbia Mastersingers
Treble Choir

APRIL 5, 7:00PM & APRIL 6, 3:00PM St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Kennewick

www.mcmastersingers.org



MID-COLUMBIA MASTERSINGERS

CONDUCTORReginald Unterseher

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April Nelson
Samantha Schneider
Ashley Walters

STRING QUARTET

Ken Wright, Lora Farwell, violins Lucia Orr, viola Bruce Walker, cello

> PIANO Stephanie Steele

SPECIAL THANKS

St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Shalom United Church of Christ

MID-COLUMBIA MASTERSINGERS



Saturday, April 20 6:30-9:00 PM The Underground, Pasco

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PROGRAM

Today's performance is being recorded. Please silence cell phones and watches. Please hold applause until the intermission to allow the first half to be a cohesive set.

What Power art thou (The Cold Song) Henry Purcell (1659-1695)

arr. Reginald Unterseher

Frozen In Dale Trumbore (b. 1987)

How To Survive Winter Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

1. Let the Leaves Fall

2. Wrap Your Body in Darkness

3. Bury Me in White

4. Swallow the Sun

Intermission

Skin Mari Estabel Valverde (b. 1987)

Threads of Joy Dale Trumbore

Breathe in Hope Dale Trumbore

Flare Dale Trumbore

JAM! Tracy Wong (b. 1985)

A Little Song of Life Reginald Unterseher (b. 1956)

We Are the Storm Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate

(b. 1968)

Samantha Schneider and Sara Magleby, soloists

Many thanks to the
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for its long-standing and
generous support of the
Mid-Columbia Mastersingers and
the Tri-Cities arts community



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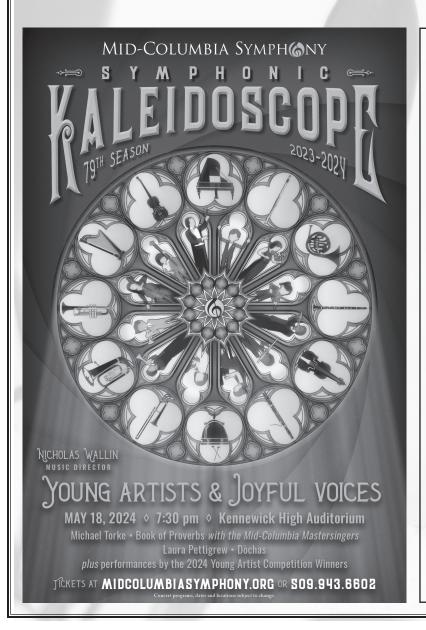


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REGINALD UNTERSEHER, CONDUCTOR

Reginald Unterseher is Music Director and Composer-in-Residence at Shalom United Church of Christ in Richland. His works are published by Oxford University Press, Walton Music, MusicSpoke.com, and his web site, as well as in the Justice Choir Songbook. He was the Washington State Music Teacher's Association's "Composer of the Year" for 2013. Reg's compositions are regularly performed throughout the world and have been featured at regional and national ACDA and MENC conventions in the US as well as at Carnegie Hall in New York City. He has always been drawn to composing pieces about the natural world and current events. His career path has careened between being a ski instructor, an opera and music theater performer, an at-home dad to three children, a conductor, and voice teacher. He has served WA ACDA and NW ACDA in several Repertoire & Resources roles over the last 20 years. He is a founding member of Northwest Choral Publishing. Reg has had more of his compositions performed in a nuclear reactor than any other composer in history, living or dead. He was born in Walla Walla in 1956.





UPCOMING ARTS EVENTS

COMMUNITY CONCERTS OF THE TRI-CITIES
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MID-COLUMBIA BALLET Apr 12-14: Giselle Act 2

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Apr 19 & 20: A Way With Words

CAMERATA MUSICA
Apr 20: Ensemble Caprice

MID-COLUMBIA MUSICAL THEATRE Apr 26-May 4: The Wizard of Oz

PRINCESS THEATRE
Apr 26-May 5: A Year with Frog and Toad

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May 18: Young Artists and Joyful Voices
Featuring the Mid-Columbia Mastersingers



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PROGRAM NOTES

Many parts of our lives reflect the journey from the cold and dark of winter to the exuberant energy of spring. This concert follows that path, and invites you to look for those parallels to your own path and journey. This concert is made up of pieces by composers and poets who are almost exclusively part of marginalized groups, groups that are well acquainted with the ups and downs of overcoming difficulties in the face of being ignored, put down, and considered "less than" other groups.

We start with "The Cold Song (What Power art thou)" from the third act of Henry Purcell's 1691 opera KING ARTHUR. The character known as "Cold Genius," the spirit of Winter, laments being roused from their frozen state, to wake only to another day of darkness and the inability to move, and would rather "freeze again to death." The music illustrates the shivering, breathless quality the character sings about in both the string parts and in the highly unusual approach to the vocal line. This was originally an aria, and has been arranged here for three part chorus.

This moves directly to "Frozen In," a setting of the poem by Annie Finch that pulls us into a winter night and the stillness and quiet that a covering of snow brings to a landscape. Dale Trumbore's setting reflects that quiet, and she provides a spare accompaniment for violin and piano and close-spaced chords for the singers, everything moving with the slow pace of winter.

Next is a set of four songs for choir and string quartet by Jocelyn Hagen called "How to Survive Winter." They are settings of poems by Julia Klatt Singer, each poem engaging a particular aspect of that seasonal shift from fall to winter to spring. "Let the Leaves Fall" is the resignation we feel, reluctantly letting go of the lush and vivid fall colors, giving in to the loss of color and energy. "Wrap Your Body in Darkness" explores the anxiety and resistance we feel to the winter cold and wind. It is full of cluster chords, nervous and angular movement in the strings and voices, and sharply articulated rhythmic passages, creating an unsettled, furtive, but still rebellious relationship with the winter. "Bury Me in White" speaks of abandoning color, wanting to be immersed in a monochromatic landscape, inward looking, alone. The music is quieter than the previous piece, less movement, insular, more spare. Suddenly, the light breaks through in "Swallow the Sun," when the cold has given way to warmth, connection, and feeling. The energy of the music is now bright, light, buoyant, glorying in the return of the spring light.

We begin the second half of the concert with "Skin," a setting of a poem by recent Young People's Poet Laureate (for the Poetry Foundation) Naomi Shihab Nye. This poem reflects her heritage of a Palestinian father, German American mother, being raised in Missouri, going to high school in Ramallah in the West Bank and college in Texas. The composer, Mari Isabel Valverdi, says that the poem "addresses themes of healing, resilience, passage, and travel." It reflects the spirit of perseverance required to live in so many cultures and places, and the need to adapt to adversity. The piece was set to premiere right before the pandemic shut down the choral world in 2020, but was not premiered until choirs were able to sing together again in 2022 and 2023.

Next, we present three more pieces by Dale Trumbore. "Threads of Joy" is unaccompanied, and full of spaces, embracing the return of "a light beneath pain" but hesitating as well. Maya Jackson's poem "Breathe in Hope" is a response to the violent deaths of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling. It asks us to examine our response, our need for healing, but at the same time our need to use the energy created by such horrible events to create real change. "Flare" takes us into the physical and emotional space where we feel like we are getting back to energy and life, we want to move forward, but we feel like a child chasing after older siblings, always behind but never giving up.

JAM! by Tracy Wong fully embraces the entry into spring and energy. The piece reflects her Chinese-Malay-Canadian identity. She tells us that it is a three-way play on words, (Jom-Ayuh-Mari) that all have similar meanings in colloquial Malay, "come, let's go!" The word "nada," in the context of singing, means vocal tone. The catchy, repetitive and conversation-like musical themes suggest a group of musicians coming together to make music, much like a "jam session." In Malay, "jam" also translates to "clock," suggesting passing of time. In essence, the pieces says "Come, let's go make some music together and sing! Leave your worries for awhile."

Now fully embracing spring and summer, we sing "A Little Song of Life," which reflects my childhood on a small farm in Milton-Freewater, outdoors a lot, always in touch with nature and the changing seasons. We are reminded that all the seasons give way to the next one, and the cycle will continue. It is layered with a mantra, "all that we need to do, be we low or high, is to see that we grow nearer the sky."

We end with "We Are the Storm," by Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate, a classical composer, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, who is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition. He asked Charles Anthony Silvestri to write this poem, full of anticipation of trouble but invoking the power to make it through. "We are the storm that gathers at last; We are the future healing the past." This piece was premiered in February of 2020, just as the pandemic was beginning to emerge.

TEXTS

WHAT POWER ART THOU (THE COLD SONG)

from KING ARTHUR, Act 3 lyrics by John Dryden

What power art thou? Who from below Hast made me rise? Unwillingly and slow

From beds of everlasting snow!

See'st thou not how stiff And wondrous old?

Far unfit to bear the bitter cold...

I can scarcely move Or draw my breath I can scarcely move Or draw my breath

Let me, let me Let me, let me Freeze again...

Let me, let me

Freeze again to death!

FROZEN IN

by Annie French, from "Eve"

Venice, December

Ours are the only mouths to taste with this smothering slow touch, and the only steps to sink like bellsounds and cave deep into the marble snow.

Women who go to the window to push their arms out to the snow and then bring the shutters back in follow us as we fall past their eyes where the black night lives.

We are snowflakes at last, as the thick never locked, never closed doors follow us through squares of light their windows have left on the snow. Once again, warmth that falls, again, though our tracks fill and slow.

How To Survive Winter

all poems by Julia Klatt Singer

I. Let the Leaves Fall

Sometimes we have to let them go, let the leaves fall.

Under bare limbs we stand surrounded

by the beauty of everything we've lost.

II. Wrap Your Body in Darkness

Put on an old hat and mittens.

Wrap your body in darkness. Carry the weight of night on your shoulders.

Bare yourself

like these winter trees.

Let beauty fall to your feet, let wind shake you, let your bones swallow the chill

of this evening's air.

Nothing, not even winter, can tame

your wild bird of a heart.

III. Bury Me in White

The silence of snow, like the silence of you is what I wake to

blinding white and falling. Start the day

By throwing away words; scarlet, indigo, then

cerulean, mango who needs them

in this kind of cold?

Bury me in white, bury me away like your heart.

IV. Swallow the Sun

A Secret. No frost today

on my window, no tumbling stars no forests of white, no birds

on the branch outside

no chance of one landing now stealing the morning with their song as I think

about your hands

and how they make me feel

as beautiful as frost

as transparent as glass

as if I've swallowed

the sun.

TEXTS

Two Countries

from Words Under the Words: Selected Poems by Naomi Shihab Nye

Skin remembers how long the years grow when skin is not touched, a gray tunnel of singleness, feather lost from the tail of a bird, swirling onto a step, swept away by someone who never saw it was a feather. Skin ate, walked, slept by itself, knew how to raise a see-you-later hand. But skin felt it was never seen, never known as a land on the map, nose like a city, hip like a city, gleaming dome of the mosque and the hundred corridors of cinnamon and rope. Skin had hope, that's what skin does. Heals over the scarred place, makes a road. Love means you breathe in two countries. And skin remembers--silk, spiny grass, deep in the pocket that is skin's secret own. Even now, when skin is not alone, it remembers being alone and thanks something larger that there are travelers, that people go places larger than themselves.

THREADS OF JOY

from "Syringa" by Laura Foley

I have noticed joy how it threads below the darkness. Have you seen it too? And have you heard it, how it speaks the unspeakable, the bliss? A kind of silence, a light beneath pain. Have you noticed? It rises like fingers and then—look! it presses through.

BREATHE IN **H**OPE poem by Maya Jackson

What would we do if we didn't have the privilege of being distracted

I know we must honor our personal lives.
I know we must not live in darkness.
I know we must celebrate the grace in our humanity.
To keep our lungs from collapsing.
We must breathe in hope.
And so have I. Taken in joy. And beauty. And selfishness. And frivolity.
And laughter. We are wonderful. Humans. We find the light.

But I fear the moment passing.
Already distracted from the fire though the smoke is still filling our lungs.

This is going to sound wrong. But I hope this pain lasts.

I hope that it holds. I don't want to heal just yet.

We have become experts at recovery. I hope we become expert at Revolution.







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MID-COLUMBIA SYMPH®NY



TEXTS

FLARE

by Stacy Gnall from Heart First Into the Forest

Wait.

Through trees

with bursting limbs

I am running.

A-blend with bark,

a mute blaze.

My eye's blue stain

on the green

I am running

towards the stream.

Past names scratched,

last summer's lean-

to, the ravine bridged

by a held breath

I am running

towards the game.

Towards the arm.

The birds cutthroat

in the clearing I am

running towards

the twist. Running

towards the same as

away. Towards the twist-

arm game by the stream.

My eye's blue, running.

Under canopy, I'm nothing.

Feet between deer tracks,

I'm vanishing. A burst,

held breath, and over

anthill say grace.

Wait.

Bright flash,

big brother I am

catching up to you.

JAM!

lyrics by Tracy Wong

Nada (trans. "tone")

Jom, Ayuh, Mari (each word means roughly "come, let's go")

Jom (also translated as "clock")

A LITTLE SONG OF LIFE

poem by Lizette Woodworth Reese

Glad that I live am I;

That the sky is blue;

Glad for the country lanes,

And the fall of dew.

After the sun the rain;

After the rain the sun;

This is the way of life,

Till the work be done.

All that we need to do,

Be we low or high,

Is to see that we grow

Nearer the sky.

WE ARE THE STORM

lyrics by Charles Anthony Silvestri

On this horizon there gathers a storm;

Thickening air hangs heavy and warm.

The fields of future lie among us cold and dry

The few among us know not the reason why.

We are lightning; we are thunder;

Generation of wonder!

We are the storm that gathers at last;

We are the future healing the past.

Storm gathers water and fire,

Stirring the earth, lifting it higher,

A storm, its beauty, tempest of light and love,

It's voice of nature below and above.

Storms will heal what divides.

Let us storm and turn the tides!

The earth cries out, ready for rain

The fields of our future grow green again.

Lightning and thunder!

Yakkookay (Thank You)!

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