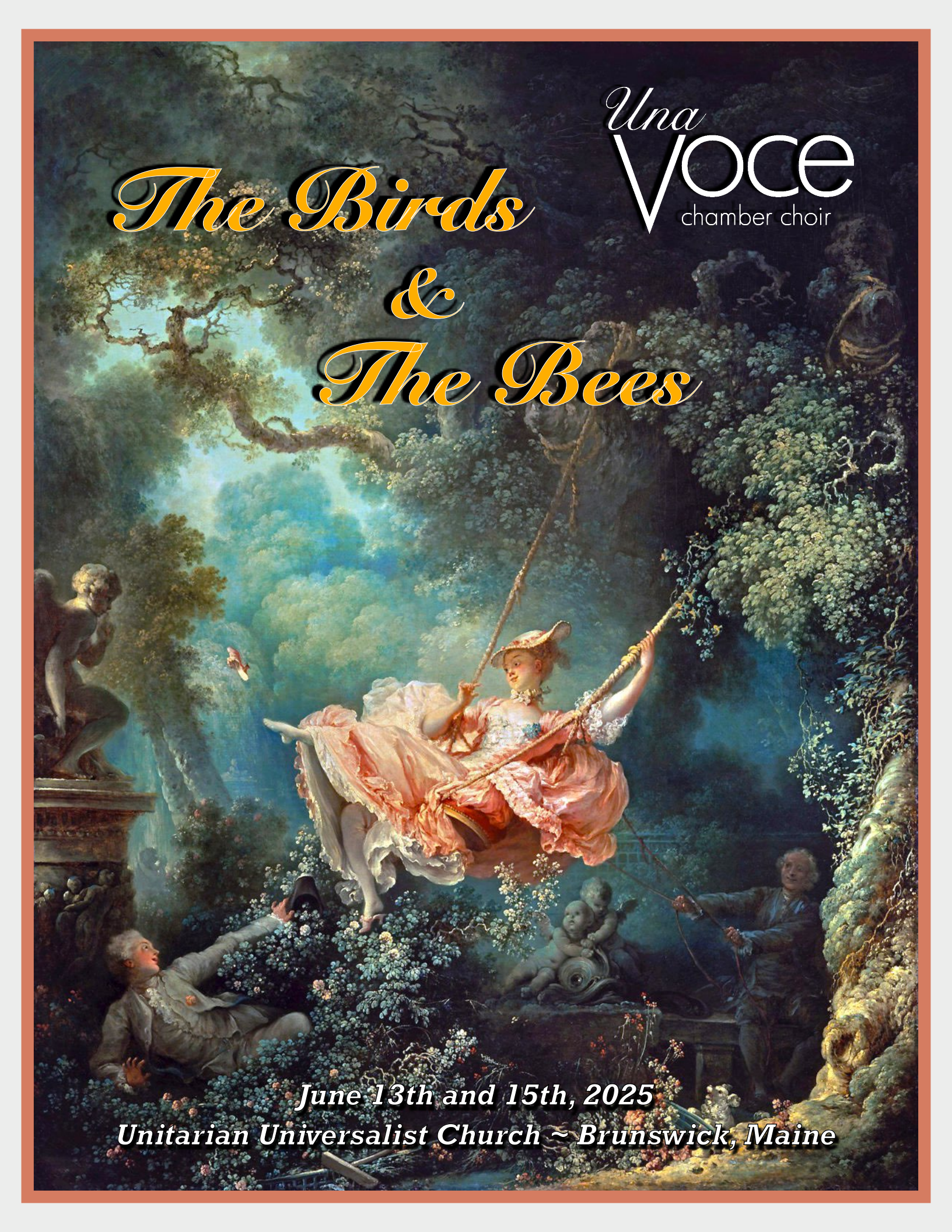




The Birds

&

The Bees

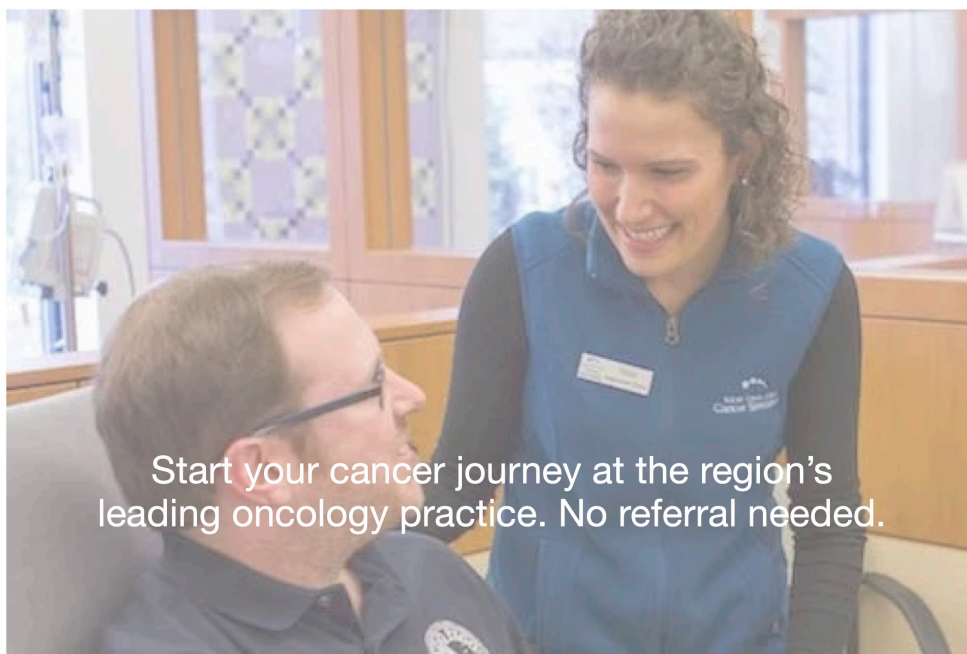
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Welcome from Claire Berkowitz

Singer and Board Chair, Una Voce Chamber Choir

Welcome to *The Birds and the Bees*—our Spring 2025 concert series!

As both a singer in Una Voce and the chair of our board, I have the unique privilege of experiencing this music from the inside out. It's a joy to share with you a program that is as playful as it is beautiful, filled with rich harmonies, unexpected turns, and moments of pure delight.

For this concert program, UVCC Conductor Virgil Bozeman drew inspiration from Renaissance madrigals—songs that were among the first to blend poetry and music in such vivid and expressive ways. While the pieces that you'll hear today are contemporary, they carry forward the same spirit of curiosity, cleverness, and emotional depth. It's music that sings about love, nature, longing, and joy—all with a wink and a nod to the past.

We're so grateful to have you here with us. Your presence and support make our work possible, and your enthusiasm helps keep modern choral music thriving in our community.

Thank you for joining us. We hope this concert leaves you smiling, humming, and maybe even a little inspired.

Warmly,

Claire Berkowitz

Singer and Board Chair

Una Voce Chamber Choir



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Caroline Koelker ~ Misty Parker ~ Salvatore Guzzardi ~ Thomas McLaughlin
Rachel Turner ~ Jan Sola-Welzer ~ Jon Chellis ~ Sable Strout

And a big welcome to our new Choir Manager, Katie Schraeder!

Dear Friends of Una Voce Chamber Choir,

Welcome to Una Voce Chamber Choir's 2025 Spring Concert Series, *The Birds and The Bees*. This performance will be a bit shorter, and *quite* a bit lighter in tone than our usual fare. The title is somewhat tongue-in-cheek...feel free to read into it as much (or as little) as your sensibilities allow.

When coming up with the overarching theme for this program, I found myself reflecting on my earliest years as a choral singer. I grew up singing in church choir, as well as a group out of Fort Western in Augusta that romped its way through old New England fuguing tunes. It wasn't until junior year that I finally began participating in the choral ensembles offered at my high school. Our choir director, the incomparable Bob Morang, had a penchant for Renaissance madrigals and *chansons*. These styles of choral music were new to me, and it's fair to say that they made a profound impression. *The Birds and the Bees* draws its inspiration from these Renaissance madrigals and *chansons*. Representing the very beginnings of a notated secular choral tradition, these pieces introduced novel compositional devices and ideas about the relationship between poetry and music. The impact of these innovations on choral music and opera proved to be lasting indeed.

Though there are only a few "modern madrigals" in this program, each selection features some element of madrigals; text painting, onomatopoeia, imitation, chromaticism, irregular phrasing, and thinly veiled eroticism. Largely *a cappella*, the resulting program alternates between expressions of yearning lyricism and cheeky rhythmic vitality, and celebrates the playfulness and inventiveness of an era in music history that redounds to the contemporary choral literature that groups like ours champion today.

So sit back and enjoy some exceptionally clever choral writing. Leave your inhibitions and modesty at the door, and be prepared to giggle (like an innocent schoolboy?) at lyrical subject matter that, while ubiquitous in today's musical landscape, was once new and exciting.

All Best,

Virgil



Program Order

Now Is the Month of Maying Carol Nicholeris (b. 1955)

The Silver Swan Oliver Tarney (b. 1984)

Sopranos and Altos

A Grass-Green Pillow

Serpents in Red Roses Hissing Joshua Shank (b. 1980)

from *Color Madrigals*

Drew Albert, Assistant Director

Les Chansons des Roses

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

1. *En Une Seule Fleur*

2. *Contre Qui, Rose*

3. *De Ton Rêve Trop Plein*

4. *La Rose Complète*

5. *Dirait-on*

Bee Songs from Emily Dickinson

Georgiann H. Toole (b. 1958)

Sopranos and Altos

The Sweetheart of the Sun

Eric William Barnum (b. 1979)

Drew Albert, Assistant Director

I Have Eaten the Plums

Christopher J. Hoh (b. 1959)

Pal-So-Seong (8 Laughing Voices)

Hyo-Won Woo (b. 1974)

Of Crows and Clusters

Norman Dello Joio (1913-2008)

Program Notes

“Who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?”

John Milton

Now is the Month of Maying

I always have been fascinated by the dichotomy of pairing an older text with newer musical techniques and traditions. - Carol Nicholeris

More than a mere juxtaposition of an older text with newer compositional practices, Nicholeris instead fuses traditional elements of English madrigals (lively rhythms, AAB formal design, “fa-la-las”) with clever mixed meter and more contemporary mode mixture. The resulting work maintains the playful charm of Thomas Morley’s original text. Pay particular attention to the moment when Nicholeris pairs back the texture from four voices to two, as the tenors and basses ask the big question, “Say, dainty nymphs and speak, shall we play barley break?”

The Silver Swan

Here we have another example of a classic literary and madrigalist trope, the *swan song*. First set by the English composer Orlando Gibbons in 1612, Oliver Tarmey’s *The Silver Swan* has comparatively few elements that we associate with madrigals. Instead, Tarmey’s approach to the text is accompanied, folksy and largely homorhythmic. While there are lovely moments of imitation, he eschews conventional text painting to create a final utterance that is sheer beauty.

A Grass-Green Pillow

If there were a “standard” subject for poetry centered on the season of spring it would probably be the subject of love and, more specifically, new love. Luckily, the genius of Keats takes on this traditional theme with the amazing poetic language and seamless rhyme he is known for. I gravitated toward this particular text because of the symmetry between the first and second halves of the poem. In the first two stanzas it sounds like the stereotypical, overzealous young man trying to woo a maiden who might be above him in social standing and may or may not return his sentiments. However, once you reach the midway point (and especially in the last stanza), it suddenly becomes much more tender and romantic - as if he suddenly figures out the difference between lust and love. I’d like to think he chooses the latter. - Joshua Shank

Serpents in Red Roses Hissing

This text starts off very simply as an exercise in dichotomy: every line contains two things that are diametrically opposed to one another. Keats takes this principle and seemingly works himself into a rhythmic frenzy until his poem sounds more like a witch’s incantation than a piece of poetry. But then, at line 23 (“O the sweetness of the pain!”), it suddenly turns into a beautiful elegy as he calls upon the Muses. After all this Keats ends up very simply in passion and sorrow over the grave of his beloved - a beautiful and very human ending to a poem that spends most of its energy invoking the gods. - Joshua Shank

Les Chansons des Roses

A choral cycle on five poems in French by the Austrian poet and author Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926), Morten Lauridsen's *Les Chansons des Roses* are about as close as one gets to a modern choral masterwork. Originally premiered by Choral Cross-Ties in 1993, it has become a beloved part of the contemporary choral repertory. Due to its many challenges (the first four pieces are meant to be performed *a cappella*) the entire set is performed with less frequency than its final song, *Dirait-on* (the only accompanied piece in the cycle). A masterpiece in craftsmanship, *Les Chansons des Roses* is chiasitic (reflexive) in form, unified throughout by recurring and transformed thematic material. Lauridsen's harmonic language is lush (he employs seventh chords and color tones with great frequency), but also understated (he routinely uses inverted chords at phrase endings, softening the sense of finality at cadences).

En Une Seule Fleur opens lightly and joyously, with all voices moving together through Rilke's text, before Lauridsen immediately repeats the idea with the altos in canon against the soprano melody. The middle section ("Tu étais assez riche...") introduces a new melodic figure; one that prefigures the melodic material in *Dirait-on*. Here, it is kicked around among the upper three voices (perhaps a musical imitation of the rose's overlapping petals?), as the basses and baritones provide the underlying harmony in longer note values. *Contre Qui, Rose* is a study of delicate intensity. Lyrical but disjunct melodic lines (which will be transformed in *La Rose Complète*) are quietly sung, never rising above the dynamic level of *mezzo piano*.

From an analytical perspective, *De Ton Rêve Trop Plein* is the tour-de-force of the entire set. Here, Lauridsen leverages his considerable skills as a contrapuntalist, subjecting the main melodic motive (itself a development on the material in *En Une Seule Fleur*) to all manner of combination. In the soprano at the outset, it is harmonized by an exact intervallic inversion in the tenor voice. As the piece progresses, the melody reappears in three part canon in the upper three voices, while the basses and baritones (à la *En Une Seule Fleur*) fill out the texture with a rhythmically augmented version of the same theme!

La Rose Complète mirrors *Contre Qui, Rose* in dynamic and melodic presentation, with sopranos and altos sharing the main melodic material over supporting lines in the lower voices. The middle section (*Je te respire comme si tu étais, rose*) moves with more urgency and dynamic intensity before arriving at the climax of the overall cyclical form (*Toute la vie*). This gives way to the serenity of the opening melody, and the aforementioned (equally beautiful and ubiquitous) *Dirait-on*, which serves as both a synthesis of all of Lauridsen's previous themes, and an elegant *denouement* to the cycle.

Bee Songs

Georgiann Toole's *Bee Songs* artfully convey the pithy charm of three poems on bees by Emily Dickinson. The outer movements make frequent use of imitation, sometimes on one word ("bee"), and other times on an entire poetic phrase ("the pedigree of honey does not concern the bee"). The gem in the set is the middle movement, *Hymn*. Here, the composer sets up chord changes that are quite bold, and reminiscent of the harmonic language of early-Baroque Italian madrigalists Claudio Monteverdi and Carlo Gesualdo.

Sweetheart of the Sun

The text of 'Sweetheart of the Sun' was taken from the poem Ruth, by Thomas Hood. This early 19th century poem was inspired by the dramatic love story of Ruth and Boaz in the Old Testament. The point at which the text starts is the moment in which Boaz first sees Ruth in a field that he owns, gleaning what is left of the harvest ("corn" in Hood's poem). In only an instant, Boaz comes to realize he has found the love of his life, and he proceeds to offer himself to Ruth at the end of the piece. - Eric William Barnum

I Have Eaten the Plums

When I first read "This Is Just To Say," I was surprised and pleased. It was new to me; only later did I learn it has become part of the poetic canon and a recent internet meme to boot! William Carlos Williams tells a multi-layered story in few simple words in a way that delighted my ear. Plus I was glad to see it's full of good vowels for singing. So enthusiastically I took up the request of conductor and singer Brian J. Isaac to set these words for his wife Megan on their anniversary.

The piece begins with altos, tenors, and basses on a gentle "ah," like someone might sing unselfconsciously around the house. This motif and variations on it recur later - using those good vowels. The sopranos bring in the text in short phrases, repeating key words as other voices accompany. Next, tenors and basses take up the narrative. (After all, we should not portray the "guilty party" as any particular voice or gender!)

For the poem's last verse, appealing "forgive me," all voices join in slow six-part chords, at first quiet with chagrin and then, seems to me, with satisfied rapture at the deliciousness of it all. The unselfconscious song breaks out again, leading to a reprise of the opening phrases. Then there's a little fugue of rumination, implying...something, which prompts a quick "forgive me" once more. All parts combine to close with a repeat of the final lines in rapturous and expanding chords. - Christopher J. Hoh

Pal-So-Seong (8 Laughing Voices)

Hyo-Won Woo served as Composer-in-Residence with the Incheon City Chorale from 1999-2014. During that span, she composed multiple works for this marvelous ensemble, including *Pal-So-Seong; 8 Laughing Voices*, in 2007. In the best tradition of madrigals, Ms. Woo intersperses nonsense syllables with different varieties of laughs to create a virtuosic and highly entertaining work.

Of Crows and Clusters

A playful setting of the Vachel Lindsay poem *Two Old Crows*, Norman Dello Joio's *Of Crows and Clusters* crackles with rhythmic energy and humor. In Lindsay's poem, two crows are conversing about great metaphysical questions ("thinking of effect and cause, and of nature's laws"). One crow asks the other a riddle, but before we can hear the punchline a bee buzzes by. The philosopher crows flee in terror, unwittingly demonstrating the principle of cause and effect. The 'clusters' in this case are tightly bunched notes played in both hands of the piano, creating a dense, earthy, and comic accompaniment.

The Choir

Artistic Director: Virgil Bozeman IV

Assistant Director: Drew Albert

Accompanist: Kellie Moody

Soprano

Emma Akrawi
Stephanie Bernier
Marsey Caswell
Jennifer Caton
Lindsay Conrad
Caroline Koelker
Marybeth McCaffrey
Denise Meiler
Susan Purcell
Hillary Shende
Fiona Vella

Alto

Claire Berkowitz
Abby Bozeman
Eileen Brown
Covey Crolus
Jean Edmondson
Jeannie Giberson
Shira Gersh
Susan Kring
Shirsten Lundblad
Kit Pfeiffer
Rachel Turner
Karen Topp

Tenor

Drew Albert
Nate Bates
Rowan Etzel
Trey Freeman
Robert Gersh
Salvatore Guzzardi
Robert Haines
Scott Hanson
Scott Romeyn
Owen White

Bass

Sheldon Bird
Jon Chellis
John Gilmour
Seth Grondin
Gavin Grover
Matt Jones
Del Leonard
Thomas McLaughlin
Mark Sayre
Adam Sobczak

Artistic Leadership

Virgil Bozeman IV, Artistic Director

Virgil received his Bachelor of Arts in Music Literature and Performance from Northeastern University, where he studied choral conducting with Dr. Joshua Jacobson. He served as Student Conductor of the NU Choral Society, sang with the world-renowned Zamir Chorale of Boston, and was named the university's inaugural Gideon Klein Scholar. Virgil holds a Master of Music in Choral Conducting from the University of Illinois, where he continued his conducting studies with Dr. Fred Stolzhus, Dr. Don V Moses and Dr. Chester Alwes. He served as Assistant Conductor of the University of Illinois Concert Choir, the school's top auditioned undergraduate chorus.

Upon returning to Maine in 2000, Virgil accepted a position as Middle/High School Choral Music Teacher in Richmond, a position he still holds. Since 2003, he has been the Senior Choir Director at South Parish Congregational Church, U.C.C. in Augusta. From 2006 to 2020, Virgil was the Artistic Director of the Greater Freeport Community Chorus. In 2023 he was appointed to the position of Chorus Master for Opera Maine, where his credits include *La Cenerentola* and *Aida*. Additionally, he recently prepared the chorus for a joint PSO/Opera Maine production of *La Bohème*. An active member of the Maine Music Educators' Association, Virgil served as Chairman of MMEA District III and Vice-President (Choral Music) for the MMEA State Executive Board. In 2018, he was named MMEA District III Educator of the Year. In 2024, Virgil received the Russell-Cox Distinguished Choral Directors award from the Maine Chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. Also in 2024, Virgil was awarded third place in the American Prize for Choral Conducting "Dale Warland Award/Community Division", and Una Voce received an honorable mention for its 2023 performance of Michael Gilbertson's *Born*, and Daniel Pinkham's *Wedding Cantata*. This summer Virgil will again serve as Chorus Master for Opera Maine's production of *Sweeney Todd*. Virgil lives in Richmond with his wife Abby, their pup Fritz, and Gus the cat.

Drew Albert, Assistant Conductor

Drew Albert is a native Mainer, born and raised in Millinocket. He graduated from the University of Maine in Orono with a degree in Music Education. There Drew had the privilege of studying with Dr. Dennis Cox and served as the music director of the Maine Steiners, and the Assistant Conductor of the University of Maine Singers. Although he started his musical training as a percussionist, choral and vocal music became his biggest passion while an undergrad. He attributes his time performing with the chamber choir "Euphony," directed by Jeff Hallowell, as one of his biggest musical influences of that time. The group specialized in contemporary a cappella choral music.

Artistic Leadership Cont.

Drew has been teaching high school music since 2011 and has taught instrumental and vocal ensembles as well as a wide range of general music courses. He is an active adjudicator, clinician, and guest conductor throughout the state. He has served as Choral Music chair in the Maine Music Education Association and is the secretary and membership chair of the Maine chapter of the American Choral Directors Association. In 2022 Drew joined the Camden Hills Regional High School faculty, teaching vocal music. He directs three choirs that are very active in Maine choral music. Drew is also the Music Director for Camden Hills' fall musical. Now the father of a wonderfully beautiful and silly toddler, Eloise, and a part-time graduate student at the University of Southern Maine, Drew has his hands full outside of work and Una Voce. He and his immensely talented choral director wife, Mrs. Ashley Albert, live in Gardiner.

Kellie Moody, Accompanist

A Maine native and resident of Standish, Kellie is a versatile pianist and music director with a degree from the University of Southern Maine, where she studied piano with Dr. Laura Kargul and voice with Judith James. Known for her collaborations across the state, Kellie regularly works with ChoralArt, the Greater Freeport Community Chorus, Una Voce Chamber Choir, White Mountain Musical Arts, and numerous school programs. She also spends summers coaching and performing with young musicians at USM's Osher School of Music camps.

Kellie's recent highlights include music directing Opera in the Pines' Maine premiere of *The Crucible* and performing Brahms' *Requiem* in a four-hand piano arrangement with ChoralArt. Her musical theatre experience spans community, school, and professional productions, including Maine State Music Theatre.

Offstage, Kellie serves as pianist and vocalist at Mountainside Community Church in Falmouth. When not at the piano, she enjoys time with her dog, Winston, who's convinced he's her manager.



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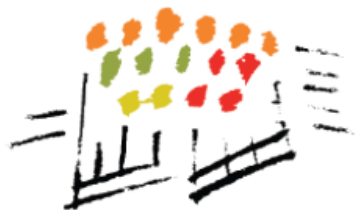


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Artwork by Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806) titled *The Swing*
also known as *The Happy Accidents of the Swing*
Oil on canvas, *The Swing* is considered a masterpiece of the Rococo era,
and is Fragonard's best known work.
The painting currently resides with the Wallace Collection in London, England.