

Una Voce

chamber choir

Evensong

Directed by Virgil Bozeman IV

**Saturday, January 25, 2020 ~ 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, January 26, 2020 ~ 2:30 p.m.
Unitarian Universalist Church, Brunswick**

unavocechamberchoir.org

Evening Song by Karen Adrienne

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Friends of Choral Arts:

Welcome to an exceptional concert, *Evensong*. This concert follows two very successful concert series and we are so glad you have joined us! Our inaugural year that just passed proved exciting and challenging and we loved every minute of it. We had the excitement of recreating Vox Nova Chamber Choir into our own choral group, distinct from the past, but still holding to the mission of performing contemporary music at a very high level. Many of the singers returned however through the audition process we have added new singers to the group. These singers have been strategically added to enhance the fine musical qualities of the group by balancing the sections, providing flexibility, but always keeping the size of a chamber choir.



We have so much news to tell you! As part of our mission to enrich the community we have added three exceptionally gifted high school singers to Una Voce. Their abilities bring more youthfulness to our sound and Una Voce is proud to offer this opportunity for them to have an experience that will give them an advantage as they go on to college.

We are grateful for the advertisers and sponsors from our first year who had the faith and vision that we could excel in our mission. Bath Savings Bank, Well Tree, Now You're Cooking, Helen C. Watts PE, Morgan Stanley, and our Community Level Sponsor, H M Payson, looked beyond the risk of supporting a new group and helped to make the year happen. We are truly indebted to them. We also welcome new advertisers for our second year. They are Midcoast Parkview Hospital, Kennebec Savings Bank, and New England Cancer Center. We welcome their community spirit to our family and we hope you will thank them too.

We have had Board changes! As a not for profit entity, we had to create bylaws that would best achieve the mission of the organization. Toward this end we created a Board that has 50% singers and 50% community members. We felt the mix would keep us in touch with the needs of the singers as well as the ability to maintain perspective and add skills from non-singers. Una Voce benefited greatly for a year from two members who had one-year terms, Burke Long, bass, and Lynn Hannings, non singer. With their departure we welcomed Katie Lauze, alto, with two non singers, David McKee and Sara Eddy. Having lost Burke as our Secretary we are very pleased that Sara jumped in immediately as Secretary! The complete list of Directors can be found in your Program. Their dedication leaves me speechless!

But we are not done! The Board has a strategic planning session planned for early this year. While we have our Mission in place we plan to use this special meeting to hone our focus and to make plans on how best to achieve our mission. And Virgil keeps smiling and planning for the June concert so you know it's going to be great!

Thanks again for joining us and please enjoy "Evensong".

Scott B. Miller
Board President, Una Voce Chamber Choir

PROGRAM ORDER

The Word Was God	Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)
	Drew Albert, Assistant Director
Exsultate	Jacob Narverud (b. 1986)
	Drew Albert, Assistant Director
avoonan dbishmayya (The Aramaic Prayer of Jesus)	Ilyas Iliya (b. 1963)
	Ryan Newall, baritone
Psalm 60; Preces Nocturnae	Mark D. Templeton (b. 1974)
	Drew Albert & Ryan Newall, baritone
** Brief 2 Minute Pause **	
Abide With Me	William Henry Monk (1823-1889)
	Arranged by Greg Jasperse (b. 1968)
Magnificat	Imant Raminsh (b. 1943)
	I. Jennifer Caton, soprano II. Karen Topp, alto
	III & IV. Caroline Koelker, soprano V. Jennifer Caton, soprano
Nunc Dimittis	Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)
	Erika Leighton, soprano
** Intermission **	
Beloved, all things ceased	Tarik O'Regan (b. 1978)
Amor De Mi Alma	Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)
	Drew Albert, Assistant Director
Evening Prayer	Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
	Frank Mauceri, Tenor Saxophone
Angel Band (From Heavenly Home)	Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

Our Next Performances

June 13/14, 2020

Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick



2020 UNA VOCE CHAMBER CHOIR

Soprano

Stephanie Bernier
Marsey Caswell
Jennifer Caton
Jeannie Giberson
Caroline Koelker
Erika Leighton
Denise Meiler
Susan Purcell
Erica Quin-Easter
Hillary Shende

Alto

Ashley Albert
Claire Berkowitz
Jean Edmondson
Alexis Gillis
Abby Johnson
Susan Kring
Katie Lauze
Shirsten Lundblad
Catherine Newell
Beth Preston
Eileen Stirling
Karen Topp
Rachel Turner
Fiona Vella

Tenor

Drew Albert
Steve Amsden
Nate Bates
Rowan Etzel
Robert Gersh
Robert Haines
R. Scott Hanson
Spencer Soule

Bass

Sheldon Bird
John Gilmour
Jeff Hollowell
Matthew Jones
Aaron Keller
Del Leonard
Burke Long
Theo Merrill
Ryan Newell
Daniel Pendergast

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.

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."



Cover artwork courtesy of Karen Adrienne

SELECTED PROGRAM NOTES

from Artistic Director Virgil Bozeman

Evensong, the Anglican service observing the canonical hours of Vespers and Compline, has a long and celebrated history. Originating during the English Reformation, the outlines of the service first appeared in the Book of Common Prayer (1549). Rooted in the monastic offices of Roman Catholicism, Evensong has enjoyed a resurgence of popularity in recent years, especially among younger and less sectarian worshippers who are drawn to the service for its emphasis on music generally, and choral singing in particular.



Thus Evensong uses the traditional Anglican order of worship as a sort of loose organizing principle. Traditional readings (Lord's Prayer, Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, Preces) are included, but not necessarily in exact, liturgically specified order. Through the employ of ancient and modern tongues (Latin, Aramaic, Low Franconian, English and Spanish) and varied compositional idioms, the goal is to create a rich concert experience that reflects both the emotional arc of the traditional liturgy, and a spirit of musical ecumenism.

Rosphanye Powell's **The Word was God** begins with a driving ostinato, constrained in dynamic and pitch range, that gains energy as each successive voice part enters. The figure has a fervent and incantational quality that also seems to evoke the hurried rhythms of daily life. These rhythms echo in a similar ostinato ("Sumite psalmum") which appears after the bright major fanfare in Jacob Naravud's **Exsultate**, a festival setting of the Psalm 81:1-3 (Vulgate).

Ilyas Iliya's **avoonan dbishmayya** is a placid and attractive setting of the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic, the lingua franca of the ancient Levant. Pedal tones built on open sonorities immediately convey a musical ethos from the distant past, and support a carefully composed baritone solo chant. Repetitions of the chant material presented by choral voices are fragmentary in nature. This is not call and response, but rather an evocation (along with the Aramaic) of a gnosis that echoes through millennia.

A thoughtful juxtaposition of two texts, Psalm 60 (translated into Low Franconian) and Alcuin's Prayer at Night (Latin) informs Mark Templeton's **Psalm 60 and Preces Nocturnae**. Composed for two baritone soloists and triple choir, Templeton skillfully offsets the texts by placing the longer Psalm in a lyrical and wide-ranging melody, set first in strict canon, then with imitation and added countermelodies. Alcuin's prayer, laden with personal pleas for God's protection, is treated as twin organa, with each pair of voices sharing a unique shape and harmonized at a perfect fifth. As the inner voices of both pairs cross, complex sonorities emerge that would never have occurred to medieval

composers, providing a lush landscape for the Psalm. As the piece progresses new choirs enter, dynamics increase, and the entire range of the combined choirs create a thrilling wall of sound, before giving way to the final verses of the Psalm sung by a lone baritone.

After a brief intermission the elegant hymn tune Eventide (**Abide With Me**), common to Evensong services, prepares the larger works on the program. Greg Jasperse's setting is lush and stately, its harmonic language a curious mix of late-Romantic and Gospel influences.

Imant Raminsh (b. 1943, Latvia) is one of Canada's most prominent composers of choral music. One of two settings of the Canticle of Mary (Luke 1: 46-55) in his output, **Magnificat** hews closely to standardized formal musical structures associated with this text that have emerged over time. The twelve verses are neatly divided into five movements, with the fifth movement being constructed entirely of musical material from the first and third movements. The first movement begins with an ethereal soprano solo (My soul doth magnify the Lord), before a joyous choral declamation (And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior).

The second movement sets the next three verses of the canticle (For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden...and His mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations). With delightful lyricism, Raminsh alternates between mezzo-soprano solo and serene chorale. As voices subside, the concluding accompaniment veers into uneasy harmonic terrain, presaging the unstable harmonic vocabulary in the boisterous fugue that opens the third movement (He hath shown strength with His arm). The fugue subject is chromatic, disjunct and set in uneven meter, with each successive voice restating it in alternating minor modes. Moments of homophony briefly interrupt the fugal design to introduce new verses (He hath scattered the proud... He hath put down the mighty from their seat). As the text becomes more comforting (And hath exalted the humble and meek) the tempo relaxes and the texture becomes more sparse, preparing the space for a mezzo-soprano solo to weave through and embellish the choral texture. The agitated fugal material returns once more, this time in hushed dynamic, and the final sonority gently embraces both minor modes.

After a placid fourth movement (He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy, as was spoken to our Fathers), the final movement begins with the doxology (Glory to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) set to the same music first presented by the soprano soloist and chorus at the opening of the work. Then a new fugue with a crystal clear metric relationship to the third movement, though the subject is inverted and has a rising contour that transforms the material into a building exclamation of overwhelming joy (As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, unto the ages of ages). The English composer Tarik O'Regan's Beloved, **All Things Ceased** is a musical tour de force, setting excerpts of En Una Noche Oscura (The Dark Night) by St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), the Spanish Carmelite and mystic. In the tradition of the Song of Solomon, the poem is deeply spiritual, clothed in the raiment of highly suggestive and erotic imagery. O'Regan's treatment is highly original, combining elements of folksong and minimalism,

and revealing his mastery of spinning sparse melodic materials, through intense rhythmic and textural variation, into incredibly rich musical textures. The piano sounds a terse cluster, and sopranos and altos immediately launch into a hypnotic counterpoint reminiscent of a barcarolle. Tenors and basses periodically inject long notes. As each successive entrance is shorter and occurs closer together, the building energy suggests a journey to be undertaken. The poem now appears in the lower voices, first with an engaging texture reminiscent of the Ars Nova, then in arcane staccato echoes, and finally in a clear chorale.

The middle section of the work begins as a series of percussive and syncopated ‘ohs’, first in the soprano, with altos, tenors and basses joining in turn. At each entrance the texture becomes more dense but surprisingly clearer. It is as though each voice, unpredictable in its own right, is really just a piece of a puzzle whose image is slowly being revealed. The poem returns underneath this texture. Each voice part moves progressively higher in registration, and four rhythms become two, highlighting the intense ecstasy of beloved and Lover transforming each other in their union. The opening music then returns in its entirety, transposed down a whole step, which imparts a warmer and more relaxed quality to the restatement, as well as a satisfying symmetrical formal design.

Paired with this signature work is Z. Randall Stroope’s **Amor de mi Alma**, a setting of yet another poem from the Spanish Renaissance, this by the nobleman and soldier Garcilaso de la Vega (1501-1536). Though entirely secular in nature, there are clear parallels in theme and imagery between Amor and En Una Noche Oscura. Stroope’s setting is breathtaking, prizing long phrases and delicious harmonies. A sparse and modally exotic middle section reminiscent of flowery cursive (Your very image is written on my soul) is elegantly approached via a common-tone pedal point. The original material, key and rich texture return as the madrigalist poem reaches its emotional zenith (For you I must die, and for you I must give my last breath).

Ola Gjeilo’s **Evening Prayer** is scored for mixed chorus, piano and improvised tenor saxophone, and is a fitting counterbalance to the Preces / Psalm 60. Unlike Templeton’s rendering of Alcuin’s personal plea, Gjeilo’s setting looks outward, uplifting Augustine’s heartfelt prayer for others in distress (Watch, O Lord with those who wake, or with those who weep tonight). His unmistakable harmonic language, influenced by film music, supports sweeping melodic lines. A textless middle section leaves space for a tenor saxophonist to improvise over a series of symmetrical chord progressions, further invigorating the text.



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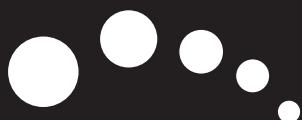
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A color photograph of a woman with long dark hair wearing sunglasses and a striped shirt, holding a baby in a red hat and striped shirt. They are on a sandy beach with the ocean in the background.

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