Aurora Chorus Presents

to Sing is to Fly

Joan Szymko, Director

Musica vivat aeterna
attributed to Clemens non papa (ca. 1510-1556)

Come Dance and Sing
traditional Shaker Song arranged by Joan Szymko

To Sing is to Fly
Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) words by Joan Baez

— It’s weird what happens inside —

An die Musik
Franz Schubert (1797-1828) poem by Franz von Schober

Dirait-On
Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) poem by Rainer M. Rilke (1875-1926)

The Singing Place
Joan Szymko (b. 1957) poem by Lily A. Long (1860-1927) ensemble*(see credits)

— Music is the Landscape —

Indian Singing: In Dreams
Ron Jeffers (b. 1943) poem by Gail Tremblay (b. 1945)

Todo o meu Ser
Joan Szymko words by Oripingalik, originally translated by K. Rasmussen; into Portuguese by Ferrand

Knud Rasmussen, a Danish explorer transcribed the words of

It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got that Swing)
Duke Ellington (1899-1974) words by Irving Mills arr. by Mac Huff

— When you run so fast —

Julia Jumps
Harmony Grisman

Why Don’t You Sing in the Chorus?
Linda Allen, arr. by Joan Szymko

Soloists: Lisa Kron, 4:00pm / Erica Daniels, 7:00pm

Amazing Grace
Text by John Newton (1725-1807) traditional melody, arr. by Szymko

How Can I Keep from Singing
Rev. Robert W. Lowry (1826-1899) arr. by Gwyneth Walker

Storm is Passing Over
Charles A. Tindley (1851-1933) arr. by Barbara Baker

— Sing Me to Heaven —

I’ll Fly Away
Albert E. Brumley (1905-1977) arr. by Szymko after A. Kraus

— Song of Songs —

Listen Closely
Steven Walters, arr. Szymko

Soloists: Cathryn Heron, 4:00pm / Jenna Scott, 7:00pm

— We have become part of the singing river —

Call
Joi Szymko poem by Alla Reneé Bozarth

CREDITS

Readings:
Kristan Burkert
Anne Heimlich
Mary King
Joan Szymko
DeEtte Bechtol Waleed
Wendy Street

Percussion:
Brian Lavern Davis
Tim Cooper
Randy Givens
Todo o meu Ser
Marylyn John: Call

The Singing Place Ensemble:
Terri Grayum
Jeanette Hankins
Joni Hartman
Lisa Kron
Constance LaGue
Nancy Otis
Jan Sauls
We begin with a touching Renaissance canon, Musica vivat aeterna - music lives eternally. Singing is sometimes referred to as the "First Art" because it is the voice that "speaks" with a song. In an interview, singer-songwriter Susan Osborn had to say about the power of vocal music:

"What happens when a room full of people sings together is that polished disappear. Not differences, but polishes, and you experience communion. And oneness with God. You communicate with a group of people you relate to differently. They're us." For the Shakers, singing was all about communion. Singing accompanied the climax of their devotions and in their dances. In the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing to be known as "Shakers," inspired by Daniel, dancing was an expression of the divine. As a "God's 16 million adults sing regularly in at least one of 27,000 churches nationwide! Imagine that!" These choirs are for a lot of folks, their first taste of choir singing is within a Christian congregation. Aurora honors this choral heritage with the next four selections.

As one of the best loved and most recognized hymns, Amazing Grace hardly needs an introduction, though its history is worth noting. Hymn text author, John Newton, in his 1779 song "Nearer My God to Thee," opened with the line "suffering, moving in the grazing in the vigor that commands us to make all things new."

How Can I Keep from Singing? is often erroneously credited as a traditional Quaker hymn. This is most likely because it was taught to English mothers by a woman who had learned it from her Quaker grandmother. Actually, the hymn text was written in 1888 by Lemuel Haynes. Robert Lowery (the source of the tune unknown) Pete Seeger popularized the hymn, omitting or changing many of the words. The new, much of the same text (but not including that verse text in the original) particular to the Quaker source. This is the version sung by activists and folk-singers—and the version beautifully arranged by Gwyneth Walker which we sing today.

A recent "Chorus Impact Study" by the National Choral Society showed that "choristers as losers" in this funny, sweet song by Linda Allen.

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The Storm is Passing Over was written by American Methodist minister Charles Tindley in 1905. Born of slave parents, and self-educated, Tindley was the earliest and most famous of African American gospel music. His composition "It's Overcoming Someday" is thought by many to be the source material for the civil rights anthem: "We Shall Overcome."

In his own words, Albert E. Brumley, on how he came to write I'll Overcome Someday: "I was picking cotton on my father's farm and was humming the old ballad that went like this...If I had the wings of an angel and I could fly away, I would go and take my songs with me that I could use this plot for a gospel-type song...actually, I was dreaming of flying away from that cotton field when I wrote "I'll Fly Away." Well, "fly away" he did! In 1932 this song was published, and it was a hit. In 1939 I launched a large campaign in behalf of the study of gospel music; researchers named Albert E. Brumley, "the greatest white pop song producer of all time." Brumley wrote about ten million times annually.

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