



## Consider the Heavens

March 5 & 6, 2011

### Concert Order:

O Praise the Lord of Heaven	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven Ellie Escher, soprano	Martin A. Sedek (b. 1985)
Faire is the Heaven	W.H. Harris (1883-1973)
Hymne à St. Martin	Vaclovas Augustinas (b. 1959)
Ich lasse dich nicht	J. S. Bach (1685-1750) (attrib. J.C. Bach)
Un Beso y Una Flor Marjorie Cornell and En-Tseh Wang, soloists	José Luis Armenteros and Paul Smith arr. Rolando Brenes

### INTERMISSION

Ascendit Deus	Peter Philips (c. 1560-1628)
Rest	Vaughan Williams
Factum Est Silentium	Richard Dering (c. 1580-1630)
Little Bird	Sedek
To The Mothers in Brazil: Salve Regina The Harmonium Chamber Singers	Lars Jansson (b. 1951) arr. G. Eriksson (b. 1936)
Into the Blue Joan Tracy, piano; Joe Keefe, marimba; Kris Lamb, flute	Andrea Clearfield (b. 1960)
Ezekiel Saw de Wheel Greg Jung, Alex Corson, David Green, PJ Livesey, soloists	William L. Dawson (1899-1990)

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### Program Notes:

Tonight's concert is a spin-off of the next concert, "Dreams and Visions" (coming in June!). These sonorous double-chorus works help transport us out of ourselves to a better place, while a few brand new works speak to the constant regeneration of the creative spirit and hope for the future.

**Ralph Vaughan Williams** is arguably the greatest composer Britain has seen since the days of Henry Purcell. In a long and extensive career, he composed music notable for its power, nobility and expressiveness, representing, perhaps, the essence of "Englishness" (The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society). Although described by his wife as a "cheerful agnostic," Ralph Vaughan Williams is beloved for his anthems, hymns and carols, and his editing of *The English Hymnal* (1906). "His command of choral writing is wide and natural, seeming to come to him in much the same way that English and Scottish sailors get their sense of the sea" (Marion Scott, *Christian Science Monitor*, 1920s). The influences on his style, ranging from Debussy to folk music, from a violinist's feeling for melody to experiments with modern dissonances, were tempered always by sincerity and a desire that his works grow out of his life and experience. ***O Praise the Lord of Heaven*** is a large scale setting of Psalm 148, intended for hundreds of voices in a large space. It is scored for two choirs plus semi-chorus a cappella. It is an early work (1913), full of modal harmonies.

O praise the Lord of Heaven:  
Praise Him in the height.  
Praise Him, all ye angels of His:  
Praise Him, all His host.

Praise Him, sun and moon:  
Praise Him, all ye stars and light.  
Praise Him, all ye heavens:  
and ye waters that are above the heavens.

Let them praise the Name of the Lord:  
for He spake the word and they were made,  
He commanded, and they were created.  
He hath made them fast for ever and ever:  
He hath given them a law which shall not be broken.

Praise the Lord upon earth:  
Ye dragons and all deeps;  
Fire and hail, snow and vapours:  
wind and storm, fulfilling His word.

Mountains and all hills:  
fruitful trees and all cedars;  
Beasts and all cattle:  
worms and feathered fowls.

Kings of the earth and all people;  
Princes and all judges of the world;  
Young men and maidens,  
Old men and children;  
Praise the name of the Lord.

For His name only is excellent,  
and His praise above heaven and earth.  
He shall exalt the horn of His people;  
all His saints shall praise Him:  
even the children of Israel,  
even the people that serveth Him.

**Martin A. Sedek** is a graduate of Berklee College of Music (B.M. in composition) and is currently completing his master's degree in composition at the Cali School of Music at Montclair State University. An avid orchestral and choral composer and conductor, Marty also works as a music educator and has been a proud member of Harmonium since 2004. Currently he serves as conducting intern and coordinator of the High School Composition Contest. *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven* is dedicated to Harmonium and receives its second performance at this concert. Says Marty: "WB Yeats' heartwrenching poem of endless giving of oneself is to me a staple of the human condition, something so bittersweet and wonderful it simply must be sung about! The returning theme, presented in both minor and major, silvery and lush, reflects this idea throughout. This work is an adaptation of an artsong of mine, written at the 2010 ACDA Choral Composer Forum with Steven Sametz and the Princeton Singers."

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths,  
Enwrought with golden and silver light,  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and half-light,  
I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;  
I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

*Faire is the Heaven* (1925), Anglican composer **William Henry Harris'** setting of Edmund Spenser's 16<sup>th</sup> century poem, is deservedly his best known anthem. Harris was famous for his church music and as a choir trainer, at both New College and Christ Church, Oxford. He moved to St. George's Chapel, Windsor in 1933, where he produced music for the Three Choirs Festival, and was a conductor at both the 1937 and 1953 coronations. The double choir motet is in a sensual, late romantic style reminiscent of Parry.

Faire is the heav'n where happy soules have place,  
In full enjoyment of felicitie;  
Whence they doe still behold the glorious face  
Of the Divine, Eternall Majestie.

Yet farre more faire be those bright Cherubins,  
 Which all with golden wings are overdight<sup>1</sup>,  
 And those eternall burning Seraphins,  
 Which from their faces dart out fiery light;  
 Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright,  
 Be th' Angels and Archangels, which attend  
 On God's owne person, without rest or end.

These then in faire each other farre excelling,  
 As to the highest they approach more neare,  
 Yet is that highest farre beyond all telling,  
 Fairer than all the rest which there appear,  
 Though all their beauties joynd together were;  
 How then can mortall tongue hope to expresse  
 The image of such endlesse perfectnesse?

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**Vaclovas Augustinas**, composer and choral conductor, graduated from the Lithuanian Academy of Music and since 1992, has been director of the famous Vilnius-based chamber choir Jauna Muzika. *Hymne à St. Martin* is the third prize winner in the international competition “Florilege Vocal de Tours,” held in France, 1996. The piece was written on the occasion of the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Saint Martin of Tours, patron saint of France, father of Western monasticism. He founded the famous Abbey of Marmontier and has many miracles attributed to him. He is frequently depicted as having divided his cloak with a beggar and being rewarded with a vision of Christ. The music is for double choir, and different voice parts take turns taking the fore from the mystical texture.

O virum ineffabilem,  
 Nec labore victum,  
 Nec morte timendum,  
 Qui nec mori timuit,  
 Nec vivere recusavit, alleluia.

Oh, man unsullied  
 And invincible by work,  
 Fearless of death,  
 Who hasn't dread of death,  
 Not declined of life, alleluia.

Oculis et manibus  
 In caelum semper intentus  
 Invictum ab oratione spiritum  
 Non relaxabat, alleluia.

Eyes and arms  
 Always turned to the heavens,  
 Not overcoming by the spirit of prayer,  
 And not wearied, alleluia.

Martinus Abrahae sinu  
 Laetus excipitur:  
 Martinus, hic pauper et modicus,  
 Caelum dives ingreditur,  
 Hymnis caelestibus honoratus.

Martin beaming with  
 Joy of Abraham:  
 Martin, he's poor and modest,  
 Stepping rich to the heavens,  
 Honored with hymns of heaven.

The motet *Ich lasse dich nicht* (BWV 159a) was long attributed to the Eisenach composer Johann Christoph Bach (1642-1703), and later re-ascribed to **Johann Sebastian Bach**, though from an earlier period in his career than his other motets. There are two facts that point in this direction: a surviving manuscript with a part of this motet in J.S. Bach's own hand, and the similarity in writing between this motet and other motets by J.S., particularly in the middle fugue. This, then, is Bach's earliest known motet, written no later than 1712, and it may be his most unusual (leading scholars to question its authenticity as a true J.S. Bach piece). The double choirs are used most often antiphonally for the first half, with Chorus II echoing Chorus I, and then come together for the middle imitative section under a soprano chorale, concluding with a full chorale. Most of the text is from Genesis 32:26, as Jacob wrestles with the angel and refuses to let go until he is blessed. The choral “Was betrubst du dich” ties this plea for blessing to the New Testament. With its intense treatment of the word “nicht” (“not”) and steadfast progression from dialogue to unity, the work is a moving declaration of unswerving faith.

Mein Jesu, Ich lasse dich nicht,  
du segnest mich denn!

My Jesus, I'll not leave you,  
for you bless me!

Weil du mein Gott und Vater bist,  
dein Kind wirst du verlassen nicht,  
du väterliches Herz.  
Ich, Staub und Erde  
habe hie ja keinen Trost,  
als nur bei dir!

Because you are my God and Father,  
You will not leave your child,  
You fatherly heart.  
I, dust and earth,  
have no solace here after all,  
but only by you!

Dir, Jesu, Gottes Sohn, sei Preis,  
dass ich aus deinem Worte weiss,  
was ewig selig macht:  
Gieb dass ich nun auch fest und treu  
in diesem meinem Glauben sei!

To you, Jesus, Son of God, be praise,  
that I know through your word  
what makes things blessed eternally.  
Grant that, in this, I now also be fast and true  
with my faith!

Ich bringe Lob und Ehre dir,  
dass du ein ewig Heil auch mir  
durch deinen Tod erwarbst.  
Herr, dieses Heil gewähre mir;  
und ewig, ewig dank' ich dir.

I bring you praise and honor  
that you through your death  
secure eternal salvation even for me.  
Lord, impart to me this salvation;  
and I will thank you forever and ever.

The extremely popular Costa Rican pop song *Un Beso y Una Flor* is arranged by **Rolando Brenes** in a choral/instrumental style with the voices acting as accompaniment texture much of the time. It was composed by **José Luis Armenteros** and **Paul Smith** in 1972, and was a hit for many groups later in the 70s. The video for the song was recorded by Nino Bravo in Palma de Mallorca.

Dejaré mi tierra por ti.  
Dejaré mis campos y me iré,

I will leave my homeland for you.  
I will leave my fields and will go,

lejos de aquí.  
Cruzaré llorando el jardín  
y con tus recuerdos partiré  
lejos de aquí.

far away from here.  
I will cross the garden crying  
and I will depart with memories of you,  
far away from here.

El día vivirá pensando en tu sonrisa;  
el mar azul.  
De noche las estrellas me acompañarán;  
muy dulce es la noche azul.  
Serás como una luz  
que alumbre en mi camino;  
brilla la luz que alumbra mi amor.  
Me voy pero te juro  
que mañana volveré.

I will live the day thinking about your smile;  
about the blue ocean.  
At night the stars will accompany me;  
the blue night is very sweet.  
You will be like a light  
which illuminates my way;  
bright is the light which illuminates my love.  
I'm leaving, but I promise  
that tomorrow I will return.

Al partir un beso y una flor;  
un te quiero, una caricia y un adiós.  
El ligero equipaje para tan largo viaje;  
las penas pesan en el corazón.

As we part ways, a kiss and a flower;  
an "I love you," a caress and a goodbye.  
Light luggage for such a long trip;  
the pains weigh heavily on the heart.

Buscaré un hogar para ti  
donde el cielo se une con el mar  
lejos de aquí.  
Con mis manos y con tu amor  
lograré encontrar otra ilusión  
lejos de aquí.

I will search for a home for you,  
where heaven is one with the sea,  
far away from here.  
With my hands and with your love  
I will find another dream,  
far away from here.

Más allá del mar habrá un lugar  
donde el sol cada mañana brille más.  
Forjarán mi destino las piedras del camino.  
Lo que nos es querido siempre quedará.

Beyond the sea will be a place  
where the sun shines more brightly every morning.  
Stones on the road shape my destiny.  
What we hold dear always remains.

**Peter Philips** was an eminent English composer, organist, and Catholic priest exiled to Flanders. He was one of the greatest keyboard virtuosos of his time, and transcribed or arranged several Italian motets and madrigals by Lassus, Palestrina, and Giulio Caccini for various instruments. Some of his keyboard works are found in the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*. Philips also wrote many sacred choral works, including this Ascension motet, *Ascendit Deus*, with its expansive lines and text painting.

Ascendit Deus in jubilatione,  
et Dominus in voce tubae, alleluia.  
Dominus in caelo  
paravit sedem suam.  
Alleluia.

God ascended amidst shouts of joy,  
and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet, alleluia.  
The Lord looked down  
from his holy sanctuary on high.  
Alleluia.

Another early work by **Vaughan Williams**, *Rest* (1902), was published circa 1904-05 in the collection *Part Songs by Modern Composers*. It sets a poem by Christina Rossetti SSATB a cappella in a late romantic style.

O Earth lie heavily upon her eyes;  
 seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth.  
 Lie close around her, leave no room for mirth  
 with its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.  
 She hath no questions, she hath no replies,  
 hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth<sup>1</sup>  
 of all that irked her from her hour of birth;  
 with stillness that is almost Paradise.  
 Darkness more clear than noonday holdeth her,  
 silence more musical than any song;  
 even her very heart hath ceased to stir;  
 until the morning of Eternity  
 her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;  
 and when she wakes she will not think it long.

1- lack

In *Factum Est Silentium*, **Richard Dering**'s setting of the battle between Archangel Michael and the dragon is extremely dramatic and vivid in its text painting. Dering was an English composer, who, like Philips, spent much of his life in Flanders. In 1617, he worked as an organist in Brussels until traveling back to England in 1625, where he was appointed composer for "virginals, lutes and voices" to King Charles I. He was also an organist at the private chapel of Catholic Queen Henrietta, for whom most of his Latin music was composed.

Factum est silentium in caelo,  
 Dum committeret bellum draco  
 Cum Michaele Archangelo  
 Audita est vox  
 millia millium, dicentium:  
 Salus, honor et virtus  
 omnipotenti Deo.  
 Alleluia.

There was a silence in heaven  
 whilst the dragon joined battle  
 with the Archangel Michael.  
 A cry was heard,  
 thousands of thousands saying:  
 'Salvation and honor and power  
 be to Almighty God.'  
 Alleluia.

After being asked to present *Little Bird* in **Marty Sedek**'s recital, the Harmonium Chamber Singers couldn't wait to perform the piece and thought it fit well with this concert. Marty provides the following notes: "Madame Jeanne Guyon wrote this poem to God during a 10-year incarceration in a dreary dungeon. My first instinct upon reading it, however, was that of a playfulness and irony - at the captor actually being the captured because of a woman's beautiful voice. The tone of the poem is certainly not dreary, and it was a gift that Madame Guyon remained so faithful and optimistic during this difficult time. Her use of music to comfort herself was a true gift, and I chose to set musically her attitude, more so than her words."

A little bird I am,  
 Shut from the fields of air,  
 And in my cage I sit and sing  
 To Him who placed me there:  
 Well pleased a prisoner to be,  
 Because, my God, it pleases Thee!

'Naught have I else to do;  
 I sing the whole day long;  
 And He whom most I love to please  
 Doth listen to my song,  
 He caught and bound my wandering wing,  
 But still He bends to hear me sing.

**Lars Jansson** is an award-winning jazz pianist and the founding member of the Lars Jansson Trio. While studying at the Göteborg College of Music in Sweden, he played with many top musicians and made over a dozen recordings. **Gunnar Eriksson** is an internationally acclaimed Swedish choral conductor who studied under the legendary Eric Ericson and is currently Professor of Choral Conducting at the University of Göteborg. He is in high demand as a clinician; one of his specialties is teaching the art of choral improvisation. His choral arrangement of *To The Mothers in Brazil: Salve Regina* is dedicated to Eric Westberg's Vocal Ensemble who premiered it in Rio de Janeiro in 1995, and includes the following notes: "Children are not the only ones to cry out for their mothers. Old men and women in solitude and despair cry out for their "mama" like children. Mothers all around the world travel to the frontlines of war to bring their children home from unnecessary killing in pointless wars fought in the name of patriotism. Mary, the mother of Jesus, represents well the loving, mothering qualities, and throughout history, people have cried out to her for comfort and aid."

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae  
 Ad te clamamus exules filii Hevae  
 Regina coeli laetare, alleulia.  
 O Clemens, O pia, O dulcis virgo Maria  
 Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui.

Hail holy Queen, Mother of mercy  
 To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve.  
 Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.  
 O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary,  
 And Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb.

**Andrea Clearfield** is an award-winning composer of music for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles, multi-media and dance. She has been praised by The New York Times for her "graceful tracery and lively, rhythmically vital writing," The Philadelphia Inquirer for her "compositional wizardry" and "mastery with large choral and instrumental forces," and by The L.A. Times for her "fluid and glistening orchestration." Her works are performed widely in the U.S. and abroad. She has composed 8 cantatas for chorus and orchestra and is working on a new cantata for premiere at the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts in 2011. Recent premieres include *Kawa Ma Gyur*, a chamber work inspired by her 2010 trek documenting Tibetan music in the restricted Himalayan region of Lo Monthang, Nepal, commissioned by Network for New Music. She was awarded a fellowship at the prestigious American Academy in



Rome from the American Composers Forum in 2010 and has been a fellow at Yaddo, The MacDowell Colony and The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, among others. She serves on the composition faculty at The University of the Arts and is the pianist in the contemporary music ensemble, Relâche. She is also the founder and host of the Salon concert series (celebrating its 24th year), featuring contemporary, classical, jazz, electronic and world music, and winner of Philadelphia Magazine's 2008 "Best of Philadelphia" award.

*Into the Blue* was commissioned by The Rainbow Chorale of Delaware in celebration of their 10th anniversary. This uplifting work was inspired by the glorious and colorful text written by Susan Windle, commissioned for this occasion by the Chorale. The work was premiered at the Baby Grand Theater in the Wilmington Grand Opera Theater on June 6, 2009.

Philadelphia poet Susan Windle returns happily to her New Jersey roots for this performance. Born in Newark, spending most of her childhood and youth in Elizabeth, she lived in Madison for four wonderful years as a college student at Drew in the 1970s. She now teaches poetry to children of all ages through residency programs in the Philadelphia area public and private schools, and leads on-going writing circles for adults. Susan is founder of the poetry ensemble Voices of a Different Dream, and author of several solo volumes of poetry. In addition to her work with *Into the Blue* composer Andrea Clearfield, she has worked with well-known Philadelphia jazz musicians Warren Oree and Sherry Wilson Butler. Susan's "poem-prints," created with visual artists Sara Steele and Alana Lea, can be viewed on her website: [www.susanwindle.com](http://www.susanwindle.com). Susan's books and CDs are available at this concert, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting Harmonium.

May you be met  
at the door and greeted  
by the kindest of breezes,  
the kind that rises  
from the earth  
through the throats  
of the ones who breathe  
Alleluia.

May you be swept up  
in the love of a song,  
lean and laugh  
like some lily in the wind—  
there's nothing to catch us  
but air,  
and our stalks  
strong enough to  
split the earth  
and reach  
for the summer sun.

May you seek the green and  
receive what you need:  
from the light,  
through the breath  
that lifts us up, out of  
the tangles of our roots  
and around  
even the most oppressive rock.

In good, kind company  
may you lengthen and swell,  
soften and spread,  
send the colors of your voice,  
every russet, carnelian,  
deep yellow  
stripe of your flame  
into the blue  
Alleluia

as a chorus of future lilies  
flourishes through you

day after day  
week after week  
June after June  
giving up, giving in, giving out:  
trumpeting  
the exquisite, excruciating  
pleasure of  
growing here.

**William Levi Dawson** was educated at Tuskegee Institute, the Horner Institute of Fine Arts, and the American Conservatory, and wrote his own *Negro Folk Symphony* in 1934. Early in his career, he was a trombonist and taught in the Kansas City public school system, which was later followed by a tenure with the Tuskegee Institute from 1931 to 1956. During this period, Dawson developed the Tuskegee Institute Choir into an internationally renowned ensemble. He began publishing and recording his arrangements of traditional African-American spirituals in 1955. Some of his most well-known staples of the choral repertoire include *Ain'-a That Good News*, *Soon Ah Will Be Done*, *Ev'ry Time I Feel the Spirit*, and this classic, *Ezekiel Saw de Wheel*. The final section is setup with many interlocking ostinati, creating the aural illusion of Ezekiel's mystical spinning vision.

Ezekul saw de wheel,  
'Way up in de mid'l of de air,  
Ezekul saw de wheel,  
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

De big wheel run by faith,  
An' de lit'l' wheel run by de grace of God,  
A lit'l' wheel in a wheel,  
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

Better mind my brother how you walk on de cross,  
Your foot might slip, An' yer soul get lost;  
Ole Satan wears a club foot shoe,  
If you don' mind he'll slip it on you.

Some go to church for to sing an' shout  
Hallelujah!  
Befo' six months dey's all turn'd out.