



Alleluya, A New Work

December 7th and 8th, 2013

Program Order

Alleluia! A New Work is Come on Hand <i>PJ Livesey, Elena Bird</i>	Martin A. Sedek (b. 1985)
Rorando Coeli <i>Sarah Hunter, Alyssa Casazza, Robert Emmerich, Ben Schroeder</i>	Jan Campanus Vodnansky (1572-1622)
Winter's Wait Alleluya, A New Work is Come on Hand	James Whitbourn (b. 1963) William Mathias (1934-1992)
Ave Maria A Hymn to the Virgin	Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901) Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Huron Carol Sing for Peace They Say the Same Bright Angels	arr. Dale Warland (b. 1932) Jim Papoulis and Francisco J. Núñez Michael D. Mendoza (b. 1944)

INTERMISSION

Alleluia, a Newë Werk <i>Rachel Clark, Ken Short, Jake Sachs, Laura Winslow, Linda Clark, John Lamb</i>	Medieval Carol
Ave Maria	Robert Parsons (c. 1530-70)
Never Weather-beaten Saile	Thomas Campion (1567 –1620)
Never Weatherbeaten Sail	C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918)
O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf	Hugo Distler (1908-1942)

CHAMBER SINGERS

Oba Ti De <i>Matthew Shurts, David Green, Holland Jancaitis</i>	Jeffrey L. Ames (b. 1969)
The Oxen Carol of the Hen <i>Emilie Bishop, Matt Shurts</i>	Michael Head (1900-1976) William Allen Pasch (b. 1948)
Miladuka <i>Adam Aguanno</i> Somebody Talkin' 'Bout Jesus <i>Susan Gepford</i>	Syrian Hymn arr. David Düsing arr. Stacey V. Gibbs (b. 1961)
Come, O Come, Emmanuel	Mark Andrew Miller (b. 1967)

Instrumentalists: Joseph Arndt, organ; Adrienne Blossey, oboe; Joe Keefe, Michael Sutcliffe,
Mark & Mia Hewitt, percussion

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Alleluia! A New Work is Come on Hand! In the words of the medieval carol this of course refers to the birth of Christ, something completely new—a fusion of God and man—and in the inspiration of this concert it refers to the creative spirit and the composer’s ability to generate something new. Our two composers-in-residence have bookended the concert with premieres which nonetheless hearken back to the traditions behind them—Marty’s in the use of the actual medieval text, and Mark’s in the quoting of the ancient *Veni Emmanuel* chant in which you will participate. In addition, we celebrate some birthdays, Britten’s 100th and Verdi’s 200th, and present a Brahms motet, a major gem of the choral canon, while the Chamber Singers explore a 20th century take on setting the same German chorale. Old and new, young and old, there is definitely something to celebrate for all!

Composer and conductor **Martin A. Sedek** is an award-winning voice in the world of choral and orchestral music, educated at Berklee College of Music in Boston (B.M. Composition) where he founded and conducted the 80-voice Berklee Concert Choir, and Montclair State University (M.M.) where he studied composition and choral conducting. A former member of Harmonium, Martin has gone on to study composition with Robert Livingston Aldridge, Steven Stucky, Chen Yi, Matthew Harris, and Steven Sametz, and conducting with David Callahan, William Weinert, Craig Hella Johnson, and Heather J. Buchanan. He is currently the Music Director and Conductor of the Choral Art Society of NJ in Westfield and is on the choral and theory faculties at Montclair State University’s Cali School of Music, where he serves as Assistant Director of Choral Activities and Visiting Professor of Music Theory. Composition awards include Boston’s Kalistos Ensemble, Ithaca College School of Music Choral Composition Contest, ACDA/Lehigh University Choral Composer Forum, and Society of Composers International. He is currently a Ph.D candidate in music at Rutgers University’s Mason Gross School of the Arts, where he studies with Tarik O’Regan and Robert Aldridge.

Alleluia! A New Work is Come on Hand is a new setting of this Medieval text, commissioned this year by Harmonium. The text has received a contemporary make-over with exuberant harmonies, a decorative oboe voice that echoes the singers, and an atmospheric element of handbells. The piece builds to a joyous climax, as an *Alleluia* should, featuring all of the forces combined and “ringing in” the season. It was agreed that the text, which focuses on the birth of Christ, should be carefully presented in a way that is non-denominational and allows for some personal interpretation as to what this “new work” is. The introspection and personal change inherent in the holiday season and the New Year is the desired focus of this piece, as well as the inherent joyfulness of this season in which we rejoice in our blessings and give to others.

A new work is come on hand, Alleluia!
To save the lost from ev’ry land, Alleluia!
We may well sing Alleluia!
For now is free what er’st was bound.
Sing we therefore both loud and high!
Alleluia!

Jan Campanus Vodnansky was a Czech composer, poet, dramatist and academic. *Rorando Coeli* is from his first collection, *Sacrarum odarum* (1613), of primarily short, homophonic works. The second chorus echoes exactly the first—having them sing from above seems to illustrate the text well!

Rorando coeli defluent,
nubesque justum depluant:
aperta terra machina,
floreem salutis germina.

The skies pour down amidst roars
and the clouds soak the righteous:
the machinery of earth is started
and the flower of salvation buds.

Dirumpe sancte solpolum
Algensque visita solum
Iam celsa montium ruent
Et more cerae defluent.

Break forth, O sun and caress the earth
that has so long been chilled:
the mountain will tumble,
and like wax will flow and melt away.

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James Whitbourn is an internationally renowned composer, a graduate of Magdalen College, University of Oxford, whose career in music began in the BBC, for whom he has worked as composer, conductor, producer and presenter. His largest composition is the concert-length choral work *Annelies*, which sets words from *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and which Harmonium will perform in its chamber version in March. Other notable works include *Luminosity*, written for Westminster Choir College and the Archedream dance ensemble, and *Son of God Mass* for saxophone, choir and organ. Whitbourn has been commissioned to compose the music to mark several national and international events, including the 9/11 national commemoration at Westminster Abbey, subsequently performed in New York on the first anniversary of the attacks, and the BBC Events' coverage of the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day. *Winter's Wait* was the 2010 commissioned carol for the King's College Lessons and Carols service. The text is by the great Welsh opera singer Robert Tear (1939-2011). The music has a modal, folksong-like quality which is transformed to C major as the wait ends in the last verse, adorned by an exciting organ part.

Days grow short, the dead leaves fall,
The mist is thick 'round the stable's wall.
Harvest's in, the fire is lit
The shepherds watch and sit –
And wait for the sun.

Hands grow numb in an icy cold,
The water's locked in its frozen hold.
Man and beast are most asleep
Across the floor a mouse creeps;
They wait for the sun.

Snow grows deep, a night owl sings
'Where are the Kings? Where are the Kings?'
Bright star shines in a velvet sky
But Oh! So bright, so high!
All wait for the sun.

Sleep is over, the cold is past,
The star has shown the world at last
That death's defeated, Christ is come.
Man's wait is done.
All praise to God's Son.

William Mathias was born in South Wales, where he began studying piano and composing as a young child. He studied at the Royal Academy of Music, and served as professor of music and head of department at the University of Wales, Bangor from 1970 until 1988. His compositions include an opera, *The Servants* (1980), three symphonies and three piano concertos, but he is best known for his numerous works of Anglican church music for chorus and organ. His most famous anthem is *Let the people praise Thee, O God*, written for the July 1981 royal wedding of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer. He founded the North Wales International Music Festival in St. Asaph in 1972 and directed it until his death in 1992. Honors included Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and an honorary Doctorate from Westminster Choir College in 1987.

Alleluya, A New Work is Come on Hand is the second movement of a carol sequence entitled *Ave Rex*, for organ or large orchestra and chorus, which was commissioned and premiered by the Cardiff Polyphonic Choir in 1969. (The fourth movement, *Sir Christemas*, is the most well-known). It is typical Mathias with its rhythmic vitality to the point of jazziness and diatonic yet piquant harmonic language. Like many 20th century British composers, Mathias recalls his heritage by using an ancient text, in this case a medieval carol.

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Alleluya, a new work is come on hand.
Through might and grace of God's son,
To save the lost of every land,
For now is free what erst was bound;
We may well sing alleluya.

By Gabriel begun it was:
Right as the sun shone through the glass,
Jesus Christ conceived was
Of Mary mother, full of grace;
Now sing we here alleluya.

Now is fulfilled the prophecy
Of David and of Jeremy,
And also of Ysaye;
Sing we therefore both loud and high: Alleluya.

Giuseppe Verdi is perhaps the most popular of all opera composers, known of course for his emotional, strong, passionate music and expressive melodies. Legend has it that the words of the chorus of Hebrew slaves, *Va pensiero*, in his first blockbuster opera, *Nabucco*, are what re-inspired him to compose after the death of his young family. His great choral *Requiem* (actually quite operatic) was composed in 1874 in honor of compatriot Alessandro Manzoni's death.

In 1897, Verdi completed his last composition, a setting of the traditional Latin text *Stabat Mater*, part of his *Quattro pezzi sacri* (Four Sacred Pieces). The first performance of the four works was on April 7, 1898, at the Opéra, Paris. The *Stabat Mater* is for chorus and orchestra, the *Te Deum* is for double chorus and orchestra, while the other two are more intimate and *a cappella*: *Laudi alla Vergine Maria* for female chorus and this *Ave Maria* for mixed chorus. In fact, Verdi did not want the *Ave Maria* published, as he considered it an exercise. It is based upon an enigmatic scale, laid out in whole notes first in bass, then alto, tenor and soprano, over

which the exquisite harmonies and intimate dynamics unfold. Despite this academic structure, the work is a gem of late romantic expression in microcosm.

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae.
Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

England's greatest 20th century composer remains **Benjamin Britten**. We celebrate his centennial this year by presenting this very early work, *A Hymn to the Virgin*, written when the composer was just 16 and still at school. Few works capture the fusion of medieval and modern better than this little gem among Britten's huge choral and vocal output. Using a macaronic (both English and Latin) anonymous text from circa 1300, double choir textures, modal harmonies and dissonances that are medieval in flavor, the work sets a mood of Spartan yet intimate devotion, and establishes his predilection for unusual texts.

Of one that is so fair and bright

Velut maris stella,

(Like the star of the sea)

Brighter than the day is light,

Parens et puella:

(Parent and daughter)

I cry to thee, thou see to me,

Lady, pray thy Son for me

Tam pia,

(So holy)

That I may come to thee.

Maria!

(Mary)

All this world was forlorn

Eva peccatrice,

(Eve the sinner)

Till our Lord was y-born

De te genetrice.

(from you, the Mother)

With *ave* it went away

Darkest night, and comes the day

Salutis

(Of our salvation)

The well springeth out of thee.

Virtutis.

(Of virtue)

Lady, flow'r of ev'rything,

Rosa sine spina,

(Rose without a thorn)

Thou bare Jesu, Heaven's King,

Gratia divina:

(Divine grace)

Of all thou bear'st the prize,

Lady, queen of paradise

Electa:

(The one chosen)

Maid mild, mother *es Effecta*.

Effecta.

(You have accomplished it)

The great 19th century deeply influential German composer **Johannes Brahms**, whose first symphony is referred to as “Beethoven’s Tenth,” actually composed enough vocal and choral pieces to represent one-third of his body of work. ***O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf*** is a good example of Brahms’ reverence for and study of the music of the Renaissance and of Bach. The second of *Two Motets, Op. 74*, probably composed between 1860 and 1865, sets the ancient Lutheran Advent chorale tune like a baroque chorale-prelude for voices, the tune almost always present as *cantus firmus* and also informing all the rest of the lines. The tune is in the soprano in verses one and two, tenor in the third, and bass in the last. The counterpoint is strict and clear, yet the Romantic sensibility is present in the variety of moods and expression of the four verses. The work ends with an exciting contrapuntal coloratura “Amen.”

O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf,
Herab, herauf vom Himmel lauf,
Reiß ab vom Himmel Tor und Tür,
Reiß ab, was Schloss und Riegel für.

O Savior, tear open the heavens,
run down to us from heaven above;
tear off heaven’s gate and door,
tear off every lock and bar.

O Gott, ein’ Tau vom Himmel gieß,
Im Tau herab o Heiland fließ,
Ihr Wolken, brecht und regnet aus,
Den König über Jakobs Haus.

O God, a dew from heaven pour;
in the dew, O Savior, downward flow.
Break, you clouds; the king shall rain down
over Jacob’s house.

O Erd, schlag aus, schlag aus o Erd.
Daß Berg und Tal grün alles werd,
O Erd, herfür dies Blümlein bring,
O Heiland, aus der Erden spring.

O earth, burst forth, burst forth, O earth,
so that hill and dale all become green;
O earth, bring forth this little flower;
O Savior, spring forth out of the earth.

Hie leiden wir die größte Not,
Vor Augen steht der bittere Tod,
Ach komm, führ uns mit starker Hand
Von Elend zu dem Vaterland.

Here we suffer the greatest distress;
before our eyes stands bitter death.
Ah, come lead us with your powerful hand
from misery to our Father’s land.

Da wollen wir all danken dir,
Unserm Erlöser für und für,
Da wollen wir all loben dich,
Je allzeit immer und ewiglich.
Amen.

Thus we all want to thank you,
our Redeemer, for ever and ever.
Thus we all want to praise you
at all times, always, and forever.
Amen.

Dale Warland is one of the most influential choral figures of our time. A product of the choral tradition of St. Olaf College, he spent time in the U.S. Air Force where he started a choir of servicemen, after which he completed his Masters in theory and composition at the University of Minnesota in 1960 and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting at the University of Southern California in 1965. In 1972, he formed the Dale Warland Singers, a group with amazingly high standards, known especially for their commissioning of choral works by contemporary composers. Upon his retirement in 2004, they disbanded after 32 years. Warland is still active and influential as a choral composer, editor, teacher, and guest conductor. He has many fine carol arrangements, including this arrangement of the ***Huron Carol*** for a *cappella* chorus and oboe. This carol is a Canadian Indian transmutation of the French carol *Une Vierge pucelle*, brought to the Algonquins by Father Jean de Brebeuf. Warland’s 2001 arrangement was commissioned by the Ames Chamber Artists of Iowa.

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'Twas in the moon of winter-time
When all the birds had fled,
That mighty Gitchi Manitou¹
Sent angel choirs instead;
Before their light the stars grew dim,
And wandering hunters heard the hymn:
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria. (glory in the highest)

Within a lodge of broken bark
The tender Babe was found,
A ragged robe of rabbit skin
Enwrapped his beauty round;
But as the hunter braves drew nigh,
The angel song rang loud and high:
In excelsis gloria.

O children of the forest free,
O sons of Manitou,
The holy Child of earth and heav'n
Is born today for you.
Come kneel before the radiant Boy
Who brings you beauty, peace and joy.
Jesus your King is born, Jesus is born,
In excelsis gloria.

1- Great Spirit (God)

Jim Papoulis' work focuses on combining the music of his roots—classical and jazz. As well as having his work performed all over the world, he is passionately dedicated to Arts in the Schools programs. As a composer he loves to write for young people, and he is also active as a professional percussionist in New York City. **Francisco J. Núñez** is a conductor, composer, visionary, leading figure in music education, and the artistic director/founder of the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award-winning Young People's Chorus of New York City. He also leads the University Glee Club of New York City and is sought after in North America and Europe as a guest conductor, master teacher, and keynote speaker on the role of music in achieving equality and diversity among children in today's society. Awards include a MacArthur Fellowship, an ASCAP Victor Herbert Award, and the New York Choral Society's Choral Excellence Award; Hispanic Business magazine named him one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics.

Collaborating, they provide these notes about *Sing for Peace*:

We felt we must write about one of the most important issues in our world today: peace. No matter where we travel, we find that in all cultures peace is prayed for, rallied for, and desired. Peace, not only in the sense of eliminating war and conflicts, but within oneself....Music attempts to bring this feeling and understanding to life.

This work was written for the Young People's Chorus of New York City and premiered at the 2004 Lincoln Center Tree Lighting.

Hear the bells that are calling me, calling for peace.
Little tree, oh, little tree,
how lovely are your branches.

The bells are ringing in our hearts and souls.
We hear them ringing in the air.
The bells are ringing in our hearts and souls as we sing.
Listen, they're calling for peace.

Yes, it is peace that is calling,
it is peace that you hear,
it is peace that will find you.

Sing peace...

Canta paz (Spanish)
Shalom (Hebrew)
Amani (Swahili)
Heiwa (Japanese)
Pacem (Latin)
Dohiyi (Native American)
Chante Paix (French)

In 2005, Harmonium commissioned and premiered *A Suite for Christmas* by **Michael D. Mendoza**, on a text by Jabez L. Van Cleef. At the time, Mendoza was teaching choral music at The College of New Jersey; he has since retired. Dr. Mendoza has over two dozen choral works published, many of which have been sung by All State Choirs throughout the country. He is also a contributing author and composer for the choral textbook series, *Experiencing Choral Music*, a four-level series designed to build music literacy and promote vocal development for all students and voice categories in grades 6-12.

Harmonium's own Jabez L. Van Cleef has written epic-length poetic adaptations of the four New Testament gospels and other experimental liturgical works. His first major work for Harmonium came when the group commissioned New York composer Elliot Z. Levine to write music for *Animalium Cantata* (*Cantata of the Animals*). Harmonium premiered the work in its December 1996 concert, and it has been performed by various choruses numerous times since. Van Cleef wrote the text for Harmonium's 25th anniversary commission, *There Is No Age*, composed by Edie Hill and premiered in 2005. *They Say the Same Bright Angels* is the final movement (movement 6) of the Mendoza suite, a free adaptation of the poem *Friede auf Erden* by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer (aka the one set to music by Arnold Schoenberg). Mendoza explains:

The poem is an affirmation of the possibility of justice and peace. It expresses our capacity for hope as symbolized by a vision of bright angels. The movement opens with harp and oboe, representing angels and the formless. When the choir makes its entrance, the singers portend the arrival of the gift of peace and the possibilities brought to the world by Jesus. Within the movement the bassoon (in this case the organ) plays a quote from the hymn *All Glory, Laud and Honor*.

Jabez's version of the poem is dedicated to the victims and survivors of the World Trade Center collapse on September 11, 2001.

They say the same bright angels come to hov’r,
In every place where human bloodlust burns,
And towers fall, and dying breath is spent.
Their calm, bright eyes behold the drifting smoke;
With wings outstretched they come to heal the dust.
Their careworn voices whisper: “Peace on earth.”

O you who sorrow, offer us your hands,
Your deeds of grief, moved by the angels’ will,
And you will build a tower of your spirit,
Of truth and justice, love and tolerance;
So now we pray, all people with one voice,
For us and for our children: “Peace on earth.”

No longer bent and huddled in the dark
Seeking an angel’s voice from far on high,
But armed with perfect love amid the fear,
Each soul will stand its vigil to declare
This message to all people ev’rywhere:
“Goodwill to all God’s children! Peace on earth!”

The Chamber Singers present the actual medieval carol “Nowell: Dieu vous garde!” which inspired Mathias' (and Sedek's) *Alleluia, a Newë Werk*. This carol is from the 15th century or earlier, and like many, is florid, rhythmic and macaronic (in several languages at once).

Alleluia, a newë work is come on hond,
through might and grace of God dëssonð¹,
to save the lost of every lond;
for now is free that erst was bond;
we mow well sing alleluia.

1- God's son

Robert Parsons, who became a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal in 1563, wrote music in both English and Latin. His 16th century contrapuntal *Ave Maria* was admired by 18th century historian Charles Burney and is thought to date from the period of Marian reaction (1553-58) rather than pre-Reformation. It includes one of the most ecstatic "Amens" in English choral music. After Parsons drowned in 1570, William Byrd filled his vacancy in the Chapel Royal.

Ave Maria, gratia plena,
Dominus tecum;
benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Thomas Campion was such the Renaissance man that he attended medical school and was a practicing physician, yet was well-known in his time for his poems and treatises on poetry. In addition, he wrote a music theory book and composed *masques* and many books of *Ayres* (lute songs), some set to music by others, and some by himself. *Never Weather-beaten Saile* is a rather spiritual song about a longing for afterlife, sometimes used as an Advent anthem. It is from *The First Booke of Ayres - Contayning Divine and Morall Songs* (about 1613).

Never weather-beaten saile more willing bent to shore,
Never tyred pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more;
Than my wearied spright now longs to flye out of my troubled brest:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soule to rest.

Ever blooming are the joys of Heaven's Paradise.
Cold age defes not there our eares, nor vapor dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines whose beams the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my spright to thee.

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry was an influential 19th century English composer, probably best known today for his setting of William Blake's poem *Jerusalem* and the coronation anthem *I was Glad*. After attempting a career in insurance, Parry worked on George Grove's original *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (contributing 123 articles in 1870-80). In 1883, he became professor of composition and musical history at the Royal College of Music where he succeeded Grove as head in 1895. He was also professor of music at the University of Oxford from 1900 to 1908. Some contemporaries, such as Stanford, rated him as the finest English composer since Purcell; others, such as Delius, did not, but Parry's influence as a teacher is widely undisputed, including among his students Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Frank Bridge and John Ireland. His six *Songs of Farewell*, which includes *Never Weatherbeaten Sail*, are the last works in his repertoire, and seem to be a reflection of his resignation to his terminal illness, making the words of Champion's poem all the more poignant.

Never weatherbeaten sail more willing bent to shore,
Never tired pilgrim's limbs affected slumber more;
Than my wearied sprite now longs to fly out of my troubled breast:
O come quickly, sweetest Lord, and take my soul to rest!

Ever blooming are the joys of Heaven's high Paradise.
Cold age deafs not there our ears, nor vapor dims our eyes:
Glory there the sun outshines whose beams the blessed only see:
O come quickly, glorious Lord, and raise my sprite to thee!

Hugo Distler, German composer, organist and choral conductor, has always been one of my favorite composers for both his neo-Baroque sensibilities and his tragic personal history. He was involved in the *Orgelbewegung* (organ reform movement), which returned to Baroque and pre-Baroque ideals in compositional forms. From 1931 to 1937, Distler put together lovely Sunday afternoon Vespers services at the St. Jacobikirche in Lubeck. Later, Nazi persecution of the Lutheran church forced him to resign his position at the historic Jacobikirche, and he moved to a suburb of Stuttgart, teaching at the Hochschule, conducting an oratorio society, and starting a family. In 1940, he left the countryside for Berlin, where formidable personal responsibilities left little time for composition. Separation from his wife and young children (to avoid the bombings), continued draft notices for a cause he detested, and an overwhelming spiritual depression led to his suicide at the age of 34. "That his heart broke showed the depth of that heart," wrote an unknown poet at Distler's death; "he saw things the rest of us were too weak and pale to admit."

O Heiland, reiss die Himmel auf shows a “new” take on an old motet, and I thought it would be interesting to juxtapose with the Brahms work. As in the Brahms, the chorale-tune is present and informs all the counterpoint, while Distler’s typical harmonies are based more on fourths and fifths than on diatonic chords. The pace, rhythmic vitality and delicacy of the piece make it a rather joyful cry for the Savior to appear.

O Heiland, reiß die Himmel auf,
Herab, herab vom Himmel lauf,
Reiß ab vom Himmel Tor und Tür,
Reiß ab, wo Schloss und Riegel für!

O Savior, tear open the heavens,
run down to us from heaven above;
tear off heaven’s gate and door,
tear off every lock and bar!

O klare Sonn, du schöner Stern,
Dich wollten wir anschauen gern.
O Sonn, geh auf mit deinem Schein,
In Finsternis wir alle sein.

O clear sun, thou fair star,
we greatly desire to behold thee.
O sun, rise, for without thy light,
we are all in darkness.

Jeffrey L. Ames serves as Director of Choral Activities at Belmont University, for whom he arranged **Oba Ti De** as the centerpiece for the 2011 “Christmas at Belmont” national PBS telecast. The work calls on musical practices of African culture including call and response, polyrhythms and movement. Ames explains, “there are over 500 languages spoken in the West African country of Nigeria—two are used in this arrangement. They are Yoruba (beginning and end) and Igbo (middle *Angels We Have Heard on High* section).” Dr. Ames is in demand as a choral clinician, accompanist and composer.

Oba ti de
Abi Jesu

Here comes the King;
Jesus is born.

Otito diri Chukwu onyenwem
Wa mu Jesu Kristi.

Glory be to God in the highest;
Jesus Christ is Born.

Michael Head was a British composer, pianist, organist and singer best known for his art songs; he is also noted for his association with the Royal Academy of Music, his choral works and a few larger-scale pieces such as a piano concerto. **The Oxen** is a pastoral setting of a Thomas Hardy poem about the legend of the animals kneeling at midnight to worship the infant Jesus. It was written for a choral society that sings charity concerts still today—The Kempston Musical Society, Janet Welsh, director, who has sent us this story of its creation:

For many years I taught in Bedford High School for girls, and one year my 6th form group was rehearsing some of Michael Head’s carols. My colleague next door said how much she liked them. She knew Michael as he was her children’s godfather. I said I wished he would write some more. She asked him and he said he would if I could send some poems. He chose *The Oxen*. Over the summer holidays he sent me a manuscript copy with a tape of him singing it. He was about to go to South Africa to examine for the Associated Board and said he would be in touch when he came back. Unfortunately while there he was rushed into hospital with appendicitis, which turned to peritonitis, and he died. I contacted his brother-in-law who was dealing with his estate, and he said that they had found the original, and that it would eventually be published and dedicated to us. This of course happened, and it was the last piece he wrote....So we feel very privileged to have this carol.

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
an elder said as we sat in a flock
by the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
they dwelt in their straw-y pen,
nor did it occur to one of us there
to doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave in these years!
Yet, I feel, if someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel
in the lonely barton¹ by yonder coomb²
our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
hoping it might be so.

1- farmyard
2- valley

William Allen Pasch recently retired as organist and choir director at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, a multicultural ELCA congregation in Atlanta and is now organist at First Presbyterian Church in Peachtree City, GA. Professor of English, Emeritus, at Clayton State University in south suburban Atlanta, he has also been a lifelong church musician and composer. *Carol of the Hen* is a charming work written for Griffin Choral Arts in 2012.

Refrain:

Foxes have dens, and birds have their nests,
but the holy child sleeps homeless tonight.

In wint'ry gloom the fox goes forth
to dine on chicks newborn from brood,
in hopes to find the hen off guard,
and make her dear love envious food.

With brightness of the star as guide
the wily foe steals darkly on,
past shepherds and past sages, too,
more subtle than their wits alone.

Refrain

Now almost there! Foul feast at hand,
full soon to snatch the innocent.
Yet not to be! With shelt'ring wings
the hen on righteous wrath is bent.

Outfoxing foxes is her skill.
She foils them with amazing might.
All Herods can but meet their match
when facing love at its full height.

This enemy is but a fox:
not lion strong or eagle brave.
It stands no chance against Love's pow'r
to rescue hope, all chicks to save.

What means this carol fabulous?
What fox? What star? What chicks? What hen?
Rich myst'ry this poor manger holds:
redeeming Grace beyond our ken!!

Bless'd by the holy child sleeping homeless tonight,
now sing we "Gloria in excelsis Deo!"

1- perception/understanding

Miladuka is a Syrian Orthodox Christmas hymn, arranged by **David Düsing**, which I learned of through the United Nations Singers. David Düsing has a varied career as conductor, singer and composer: he has sung with and arranged for Robert DeCormier, toured with Peter Schickele (and his alter ego PDQ Bach), and conducted at New England Conservatory in Boston. We sing this with hope for peace in Syria and everywhere. We are indebted to Rana Daher for her help with the pronunciation.

ميلادك ايها المسيح الهنا قد اطلع نور المعرفة في العالم
لأن الساجدين للكواكب به تعلموا من الكوكب السجود لك
يا شمس العدل
وان يعرفوا انك من مشارق العلو اتيت
يا رب المجد لك

Thy nativity, here is Christ, our God;
Thy birth giveth rise to enlighten the truths Thou bringeth to the world.
For they that worshiped the stars did learn to worship Thee, O Sun of Justice,
And to know from the east and of the highest, Thou didst come.
O Lord, glory to Thee.

Stacey V. Gibbs has many arrangements of spirituals in print. Highly acclaimed for his expertise in bringing new vitality and excitement to these beloved pieces, they have reached a wide range of choirs both internationally and in the U.S. where they have been featured in numerous festivals, celebrations, and competitions as well as at ACDA Regional and National Conferences. Stacey resides in Detroit. *Somebody Talkin' 'Bout Jesus* is a spiritual with a particular Christmas emphasis, written for The Sunday Night Singers, a young California chamber choir recently crowned World Champions at the 2012 World Choir Games, and who collaborated with Gibbs on a recording of his music.

Refrain:
Everywhere I go,
Everywhere I go, O Lord,
You know that everywhere I go,
Somebody talkin' 'bout my Jesus.

They turned away Joseph an' Mary from the Inn,
Somebody talkin' 'bout my Jesus.
A baby born in Bethlehem,
Somebody talkin' 'bout my Jesus.

Refrain

Born, born of the Virgin Mary,
Somebody talkin' 'bout my Jesus.
Born, born on Christmas mornin',
Somebody talkin' 'bout my Jesus.

Refrain

Some call Him Counselor,
Call Him King Jesus,
Almighty God, Lord Emanuel,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Oh, what a story to tell!

Refrain

Mark Miller believes passionately that music can change the world. He also believes in Cornell West's quote that "Justice is what love looks like in public." His dream is that the music he composes, performs, teaches and leads will inspire and empower people to create a beloved community. Mark serves as Assistant Professor of Church Music at Drew Theological School and is a Lecturer in the Practice of Sacred Music at Yale University. He also is the Minister of Music at Christ Church in Summit, NJ. Since 1999, Mark has led music for United Methodists and others around the country, including directing music for the 2008 General Conference. His choral anthems are best sellers for Abingdon Press and Choristers Guild and his hymns are widely published. Mark received his Bachelor of Arts in Music from Yale University and his Master of Music in Organ Performance from Juilliard. Mark has been composer-in-residence for Harmonium since 1998. He has written several works for Harmonium, including the major cantata on Walt Whitman's *Song of the Open Road*, and the moving Holocaust remembrance setting of *Before Too Long*, which Harmonium performed for the Eastern Division of ACDA.

Mark explains:

The text for this hymn, *Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, is originally written in Latin from the 9th century and the tune is said to be of French origin in the 14th century. It is probably the most well-known hymn sung in Christian churches during the season of Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas. I always enjoy setting "ancient" texts to new music, and in this case, I use the refrain from the original hymn as the climax for both the choir and audience to sing together.

Come, O come, Emmanuel,
ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here,
'til the love of God appears.

O Come, thou wisdom from on high,
order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
teach us in her ways to go.

O Come, thou Dayspring,
come cheer us our spirits by thine advent here,
lift the gloomy clouds of night,
death's dark shadows give flight.

Rejoice! O Israel!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, Israel.

Come, desire of nations bind
all peoples in one heart and mind,
bid strife and discord cease,
fill the world with heaven's peace.

Come, thou key of David, come,
open wide our heavenly home.

Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.