

Harmonium Chamber Singers Concert 2018– Songs of Farewell

Saturday April 28 7:30 p.m. Grace Church, Madison

Sunday April 29 3 p.m. Christ Church, Short Hills

Nunc Dimittis a 8 G. P. Palestrina (c. 1525-1594)
Songs of Farewell C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918)

1. *My soul, there is a country* - words by Henry Vaughn - SATB
2. *I know my soul hath power* - words by John Davies - SATB
3. *Never weather-beaten sail* - words by Thomas Campion - SSATB
4. *There is an old belief* - words by J. G. Lockhart - SSATBB
5. *At the round earth's imagined corners* - words by John Donne - SSAATTBB
6. *Lord, let me know mine end* - Psalm 39 - SATB.SATB

INTERMISSION

Fire and Ice (Frost) <i>World Premiere</i>	Emily F. James
A Clear Midnight (Whitman)	Ezra Donner (b. 1986)
Fear No More (Shakespeare)	Matthew Harris (b. 1956)
<i>Innsbruck ich muss dich lassen</i>	Heinrich Isaac (1450-1517)
Swansea Town	Gustav Holst (1874-1934)
Old Ship of Zion	K. Lee Scott (b. 1950)
<i>Linda Clark, Matthew Lee</i>	
Farewell Overture	Jean Belmont (b. 1939)
I'll Be Seeing You	Sammy Fain, arr. Darmon Meader
The First of My Lovers	Sydney Carter (1915-2004)
<i>Kathy Earle, PJ Livesey</i>	arr. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)

The Harmonium Chamber Singers are 26 of the most advanced members of the Harmonium Choral Society, a 100-voice auditioned community choir of singers ranging in age from 15 to 80, including a large number of music educators. Harmonium is dedicated to performing a diverse repertoire at a high artistic level, and to increasing community appreciation of choral music through concerts, education and outreach. Harmonium has sponsored major commissions, musicianship workshops, and an annual High School Student Choral Composition Contest; toured internationally; and sung for prestigious music conventions. The Chamber Singers specialize in unaccompanied repertoire with special emphasis on the Renaissance and contemporary works.

Artistic Director since 1987, **Dr. Anne Matlack** holds a BA in Music from Yale University and MM & DMA Choral Conducting degrees from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Dr. Matlack is celebrating her 27th year as Organist/Choirmaster at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison where she directs a full program of children and adult choirs and a concert series, Grace Community Music. Grace Church and Harmonium singers joined to serve as Choir-in Residence at Winchester Cathedral, UK, in the summer of 2015. Dr. Matlack is **president-elect** of the New Jersey Board of the American Choral Directors Association, where she has served as **Repertoire and Resources** Chair for Community Choirs for many years. She is the 2003 recipient of the Arts Council of the Morris Area's *Outstanding Professional in the Arts Award*.

The great Renaissance master **Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina** was revered for his many sacred works as the greatest Italian master of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. This setting of the Canticle *The Song of Simeon* has a double choir texture.

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 Grove's original *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, and became professor of composition and musical history at the Royal College of Music; he was also professor of music at the University of Oxford from 1900 to 1908. Parry's influence as a teacher was profound, including among his students Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Frank Bridge and John Ireland. His six *Songs of Farewell* – the last works in his repertoire – seem to be a reflection of his resignation to his terminal illness as he struggles with his faith and mortality setting profound poetry with exquisite music.

“They were composed during the First World War. For Parry, as for everyone, the appalling events unfolding across the channel were a desperately agonizing time. As Jeremy Dibble says in his definitive biography, Parry experienced ‘an incredulity, combined with a profound sense of betrayal, that a nation of artistic heroes who had taught him everything.....could be capable of such carnage’. By the time Parry was composing the *Songs of Farewell* he knew that he had not long to live. Though they are Parry's own valediction – he died two years after their completion – they can also be seen as his farewell to the rapidly vanishing world of his youth. Common to all the texts are the contrasting themes of the transitory nature of life and the redeeming power of faith. The motets are to a large extent expressions of personal belief rather than orthodox liturgical works; only the final setting has a recognized sacred text.”
-John Bawden, *Directory of Choral Music*

Emily F. James is a native of Northern New Jersey where she taught instrumental, general, and adaptive needs music in the New Jersey Public Schools. She completed B.A. and M.A. degrees in Music Education from Montclair State University where she graduated *Summa Cum Laude* with both degrees. Additionally, Emily is a recipient of many awards including the Dean's Scholar Award for her graduate thesis research at Montclair State University, the Outstanding Graduate Student in Music Education Award from Montclair State University, and was a concerto finalist in the annual Concerto Competition during her undergraduate studies at Montclair State University. She is currently pursuing an M.F.A. in Musical Theatre Writing, with an emphasis on music composition, from the Tisch School of the Arts, New York University where she attends on a scholarship. When she is not writing, performing, or teaching, Emily enjoys reading a good book and conversations with good friends. A very

special thank you to Dr. Anne Matlack and the Harmonium Chamber Singers for this debut performance of *Fire and Ice*. *Fire and Ice* is a musical adaptation of Robert Frost's poem by the same title which originated from a choral writing assignment during Emily's first semester of studies at New York University. Robert Frost's poem was so inspiring that Emily began hearing music almost as soon as she started to read the poem. From then on the piece basically evolved into what it is today. Throughout the composition the differing qualities of "fire" and "ice" are explored with lush dissonant harmonies, cascading vocal entrances and contrasting dynamics reflecting originality and capturing influences of the Duruflé *Requiem*, one of Emily's favorite choral works. *Fire and Ice* is the first choral composition Emily has written.

A Clear Midnight is a delicate, silence-filled setting of part of a Walt Whitman text. **Ezra Donner** is an American composer, conductor, pianist, and teacher who holds degrees from Indiana University and the University of Michigan.

Composer **Matthew Harris** lives in New York City, where he works as a musicologist. He studied at The Juilliard School, New England Conservatory and Harvard University, and has received numerous grants and awards. His six books of *Shakespeare Songs* are justifiably popular with choruses. Harmonium has performed them in various concerts, as well as having commissioned and premiered his major Christmas oratorio, *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, in 2002. Matthew also serves as a judge for our High School Composition Contest. *Shakespeare Songs* are a *cappella* musical settings of the lyrics to songs in Shakespeare's plays, in styles ranging from modern madrigal to a little bit of jazz and rock. Harris says, "Fear No More is an elegy which describes death so soothingly, it almost becomes a lullaby." The text is from Cymbaline.

This beloved Renaissance tune, *Innsbruck, ich muss dich lassen* is by the Franco-Flemish composer **Heinrich Isaac**. The melody was later used in the Lutheran chorale, *O Welt, ich muß dich lassen*.

Gustav Theodore Holst was an English composer, arranger and teacher. He is best known for his orchestral suite *The Planets*, and lots of choral works as well. He was a student of Parry's and teamed up with Vaughan Williams to study and collect English folk tunes, many of which made it into the Anglican hymnal. *Swansea Town* is an arrangement of a sea shanty with some coloristic depictions of a storm at sea.

K. Lee Scott is one of America's foremost composers of music for the church. His hymns are found in eight hymnals and his 300 published compositions include anthems, hymns, works for solo voice, organ, brass, and major works. *The Old Ship of Zion* is a wonderful arrangement of the traditional spiritual in which the soul's journey to heaven is depicted on a ship.

Jean Belmont Ford was born in California, and lives in Kansas. In a recent interview she provided the following unconventional biography: "I went to school with Joan Baez. We sang in the same group. I heard a high school group sing, and they moved me, so I started writing for choral groups. My mother was my piano teacher. She gave recitals every year. I had perfect pitch. I would sit down and play my mother's pieces. I never bothered to learn how to read things. I didn't practice much, and I forgot the piece I was supposed to play, so I made up the piece on the spot. All the parents crowded around and

said, "How interesting." I was a rural child and had no playmates. I sang echoes down the canyons and developed a falsetto. My mom wrote down my pieces, and entered a piece I wrote for the California young composers competition, and I won. So, I decided to go to University for composition. My mother went to the composition teacher and had him take me on before the school year started. So, I took theory in high school, and I entered in second semester theory. Essentially, I was self-taught. All Darius Milhaud's students wrote just like him, and I wasn't interested. I wanted to find my own voice. I regarded music as polishing a jewel. Writing something that really said what you wanted it to say without wasting time. What interested me was writing intense music that was packed with emotion. Answering the question is easy. It make take you some time, but answering the question is the easy part. Figuring out the right question is the hard thing. The goal is to write a piece of music that feels fresh but also feels like it has always been there." *Farewell Overture* is obviously a humorous piece that reflects her eclecticism.

Recognized in both the jazz vocal and instrumental worlds, Darmon Meader is a distinguished vocalist, arranger and saxophonist who has achieved international recognition as the founder, musical director, chief arranger, composer, saxophonist, and tenor vocalist with New York Voices, for whom this arrangement was written. *I'll Be Seeing You* is a popular song, with music by Sammy Fain and lyrics by Irving Kahal. Published in 1938, it was inserted into the Broadway musical *Right This Way*, which closed after fifteen performances. In the musical it was performed by the singer Tamara Drasin, who had a few years earlier introduced "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes". The song is a jazz standard, and has been covered by many musicians. The musical theme has emotional power, and was much loved during World War II, when it became an anthem for those serving overseas (both British and American soldiers). (Wikipedia).

Here is another gorgeous arrangement by professional choir *Conspirare's* conductor **Craig Hella Johnson** of **Sydney Carter's *To the First of My Lovers***. Carter was a British poet, songwriter and folk musician best known for his iconic song "Lord of the Dance." Please join us in singing the last verse.

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