



# EMERALD

E N S E M B L E

## SERENADE TO MUSIC ENGLISH CHORAL MASTERWORKS

Friday, February 10, 2017

7:30 pm

*Vashon Center for the Arts*

*Vashon, Washington*

Saturday, February 25th, 2017

8:00 pm

*Trinity Episcopal Parish*

*Seattle, Washington*

# EMERALD ENSEMBLE

## Our Mission:

*The Emerald Ensemble enlightens the mind, uplifts the heart, and enriches the soul through great choral music presented with passion and skill. We envision a world made better through great choral music.*

## PERFORMING ARTISTS

### **Sopranos:**

Holly Boaz  
Erika Chang  
Rebekah Gilmore  
Emily Hendrix  
Lisa Cardwell Pontén  
Linda Strandberg

### **Altos:**

Julia Benzinger  
Christine Knackstedt  
Kathryn Miller  
Tyler Morse  
Heidi Vanderford  
Kathryn Weld

### **Tenors:**

Orrin Doyle  
David Hendrix  
Brandon Higa  
Dustin Kaspar  
Sid Law  
Fred McIlroy

### **Basses:**

Charles Robert Austin  
Gus Blazek  
Michael Dudley  
Scott Kovacs  
Jonathan Silvia  
Charles Robert Stephens

Jonathan Graber, Violin

Andrew Seifert, Piano

## **Dr. Gary D. Cannon, Artistic Director**

J. Scott Kovacs, Executive Director

## LEADERSHIP AND GUIDANCE:

Jo Ann Bardeen, Board Secretary

Markdavin Obenza, *Byrd Ensemble*, Fiscal Sponsor

Marnie Cannon, Advisory

Jennifer Carter, Board President

Barbara Leigh, Incorporation Assistance

Michael Monnikendam, Board Member

James Savage, Board Member

## CONCERT VOLUNTEERS:

*(Seattle performance only)*

Christine Dunbar, Vicky Henderson, Logan Krupp, Mary L'Hommedieu,  
Ann Marten, Tara O'Brien-Pride, Lonnie Peck



*The Emerald Ensemble is a Professional Choral Affiliate of the Byrd Ensemble.*

# PROGRAM

## SERENADE TO MUSIC English Choral Masterworks

Emerald Ensemble

Friday, February 10, 2017

Saturday, February 25, 2017

Hymn to St. Cecilia (1942)

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

On Craig Ddu (1907)

Frederick Delius (1862–1934)

Five Negro Spirituals, from *A Child of Our Time* (1941/58)

Michael Tippett (1905–1998)

1. Steal away
2. Nobody knows
3. Go down, Moses
4. By and by
5. Deep river

Faire is the heaven (1923)

William H. Harris (1883–1973)

*Intermission*

Where does the uttered Music go? (1946)

William Walton (1902–1983)

Serenade to Music (1938)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

Mater ora filium (1921)

Arnold Bax (1883–1953)

# TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

## Hymn to St. Cecilia, Benjamin Britten

### I

In a garden shady this holy lady  
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,  
Like a black swan as death came on  
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:  
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin  
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,  
And notes tremendous from her great engine  
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,  
Moved to delight by the melody,  
White as an orchid she rode quite naked  
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;  
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing  
Came out of their trance into time again,  
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses  
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions  
To all musicians, appear and inspire:  
Translated Daughter, come down and startle  
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

### II

I cannot grow;  
I have no shadow  
To run away from,  
I only play.

I cannot err;  
There is no creature  
Whom I belong to,  
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat  
When it knows it  
Can now do nothing  
By suffering.

All you lived through,  
Dancing because you  
No longer need it  
For any deed.

I shall never be  
Different. Love me.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions  
To all musicians, appear and inspire:  
Translated Daughter, come down and startle  
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

### III

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,  
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,  
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all  
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,  
Where Hope within the altogether strange  
From every outworn image is released,  
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast  
Into a world of truths that never change:  
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,  
Playing among the ruined languages,  
So small beside their large confusing words,  
So gay against the greater silences  
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,  
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,  
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,  
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,  
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin  
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.  
O law drummed out by hearts against the still  
Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.  
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath  
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.  
O trumpets that unguarded children blow  
About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

*Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions  
To all musicians, appear and inspire:  
Translated Daughter, come down and startle  
Composing mortals with immortal fire.*

— W. H. Auden (1907–1973)  
*Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1940)

### **On Craig Ddu, Frederick Delius**

The sky through the leaves of the bracken,  
Tenderly, pallidly blue,  
Nothing but sky as I lie on the mountain-top.  
Hark! for the wind as it blew,

Rustling the tufts of my bracken above me,  
Brought from below  
Into the silence the sound of the water.  
Hark! for the oxen low,

Sheep are bleating, a dog  
Barks, at a farm in the vale:  
Blue through the bracken, softly enveloping,  
Silence, a veil.

— Arthur Symons (1865–1945)  
from *London Nights* (1895)

### **Five Negro Spirituals, Sir Michael Tippett** from *A Child of Our Time*

#### **1. Steal away**

Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus.

Steal away, steal away home.

I han't got long to stay here.

My Lord, he calls me, he calls me by the thunder.

The trumpet sounds within-a my soul.

I han't got long to stay here.

*Steal away...*

Green trees a-bending, poor sinner  
stands a-trembling.

The trumpet sounds within-a my soul.

I han't got long to stay here.

*Steal away...*

#### **2. Nobody knows**

Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,

Nobody knows the trouble I see.

Nobody knows the trouble I see, Lord,

Nobody knows like Jesus.

O brothers, pray for me,

Help me to drive old Satan away.

*Nobody knows...*

O mothers, pray for me,

Help me to drive old Satan away.

*Nobody knows...*

#### **3. Go down, Moses**

Go down, Moses, way down in Egypt land;

Tell old Pharaoh to let my people go.

When Israel was in Egypt land,

Oppressed so hard they could not stand,

*Let my people go.*

“Thus spake the Lord,” bold Moses said,

“If not, I'll smite your firstborn dead.”

*Let my people go.*

#### 4. **By and by**

O by and by, I'm going to lay down my heavy load.

I know my robe's going to fit me well,  
I've tried it on at the gates of Hell.  
O Hell is deep and a dark despair,  
O stop, poor sinner, and don't go there!  
*O by and by...*

#### 5. **Deep river**

Deep river, my home is over Jordan.  
Deep river, Lord,  
I want to cross over into campground.

Oh, chillun! Oh, don't you want to go to  
that gospel feast,  
That promised land were all is peace.  
Walk into heaven and take my seat,  
And cast my crown at Jesus' feet.  
*Deep river...*



seattlesings A project of the  
Greater Seattle  
Choral Consortium

**This choir is a proud member of the**  
greater seattle  
**CHORAL**  
consortium

Access the rich variety of excellent  
performances available in our  
online calendar at  
**www.seattlesings.org**  
or scan the image below.

#### **Faire is the heaven,** Sir William Henry Harris

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.\*  
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 the 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 endless perfectnesse?

— Edmund Spenser (c.1552–1599)  
from *A Hymne of Heavenly Beautie* (1596)  
\* overdight = covered over

#### **Where does the uttered Music go?**

Sir William Walton

Where does the uttered Music go?  
When well attempered mind and hand  
Have made the mortal clay to glow  
And separate spirits understand?

Ah, whither, whither goes the boon,  
The joy, that sweeps the wilful sense  
Into the planetary tune  
Of sun-directed influence?

What is this creature, Music, save the Art,  
The Rhythm that the planets journey by?  
The living Sun-Ray entering the heart,  
Touching the Life with that which cannot die?

This Man with Music touched our minds  
With rapture from the shining ranks,  
The Loves and Laws of unknown kinds  
Who utter everlasting thanks.

All that he uttered, may remain  
As Light, as Order, cleaving Space,  
Within the emptiness, a gain,  
Within the solitude, a grace.

O Mortals, praise him, for his hand  
Brought to his brothers many a ray  
From Light perceived, though never scanned,  
From Law unknown, which all obey.

— John Masefield (1878–1967)  
*Sir Henry Wood* (1946)

### **Serenade to Music**, Ralph Vaughan Williams

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Come, ho! and wake Diana<sup>1</sup> with a hymn!  
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,  
And draw her home with music.

I am never merry when I hear sweet music.  
The reason is, your spirits are attentive:  
The man that hath no music in himself,  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,

Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus: <sup>2</sup>  
Let no such man be trusted.

Music! hark! It is your music of the house.  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.  
Silence bestows that virtue on it.  
How many things by season season'd are  
To their right praise and true perfection!  
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion<sup>3</sup>  
And would not be awaked.

Soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

— William Shakespeare (1564–1616)  
from *The Merchant of Venice* (1599?)

<sup>1</sup>Diana = ancient Roman goddess of the moon

<sup>2</sup>Erebus = ancient Greek deity born out of the primordial chaos, associated with darkness

<sup>3</sup>Endymion = mythological Greek shepherd. At the request of Selene, goddess of the moon, Zeus caused him to sleep eternally. She would visit Endymion, whom she loved, every night.

### **Mater ora filium**, Sir Arnold Bax

*Mater ora filium  
ut post hoc exilium  
nobis donet gaudium  
beatorum omnium. Amen.*

(Mother, pray to your son  
that, after this exile,  
to us he may grant the joy  
of all the blessed. Amen.)

Fair maiden, who is this bairn  
that thou bearest in thine arm?  
Sir, it is a kinges son  
that in heaven doth wone.

*Mater ora filium...*

Man to father he had none,  
but himself God alone.  
Of a maiden he would be born  
to save mankind that was forlorn.

*Mater ora filium...*

The kings brought him presents:  
gold, myrrh, and frankincense.  
To my son full of might,  
king of kings and lord of right.

*Alleluia. Mater ora filium...*

Fair maiden, pray for us  
unto thy son, sweet Jesus,  
that he may send us of his grace  
in heaven on high to have a place,  
that he will send us by his grace  
in heaven on high to have a place.

*Mater ora filium... Alleluia.*

Mother, pray to your son  
that, after this exile,  
to us he may grant the joy  
of all the blessed. Amen.



## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



Dr. Gary D. Cannon is one of the Seattle area's most versatile choral personalities, active as conductor, musicologist, and singer. He is co-founder and Artistic Director of the Emerald Ensemble. He will conduct the ensemble through its 2016–17 inaugural season.

Since 2008, Dr. Cannon has served as conductor and Artistic Director of two prominent community choirs. The Cascadian Chorale, a chamber choir based in the Eastside suburb of Bellevue, performs a breadth of mostly unaccompanied repertoire including many premieres of works by local composers. The Vashon Island Chorale, numbering 80–100 singers, is a focal point of its island's arts community. At the invitation of the Early Music Guild, he founded and directed a Renaissance choir, *Sine Nomine* (2008–15). He has three times conducted for Vashon Opera. Equally comfortably directing professional and volunteer ensembles, Dr. Cannon has also conducted Anna's Bay Chamber Choir, Choral Arts, Earth Day Singers, Kirkland Choral Society, Northwest Mahler Festival, Seattle Praetorius Singers, several choirs at the University of Washington, and others.

Dr. Cannon lectures for Seattle Symphony and has provided written program notes for choirs across the country. His research and writing topics span music of nine centuries, with special emphasis on William Walton and other twentieth-century English composers. He taught at Whatcom Community College (2004–6), where he received the Faculty Excellence Award. As a tenor, he has appeared as a soloist with Pacific Northwest Ballet, Seattle Philharmonic, and the Auburn, Eastside, Rainier, and Sammamish Symphony Orchestras, as well as Byrd Ensemble, Choral Arts, Master Chorus Eastside, St. James Cathedral Cantorei, Seattle Bach Choir, and Tudor Choir. A California native, Dr. Cannon holds degrees from the University of California at Davis and the University of Washington.





# PROGRAM NOTES

## **Hymn to St. Cecilia, opus 27** (1942) Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

In early 1939, war in Europe seemed inevitable. Benjamin Britten, a young English composer, was not immune to the sense of impending doom, and decided—together with his friend, the tenor Peter Pears—to flee to North America. Perhaps there, he reasoned, he could continue to create without political distractions, and, more to the point, perhaps there his music would be better received. From this American period date Britten's first mature masterworks, such as the song-cycle *Les Illuminations*, the *Sinfonia da Requiem*, and the Violin Concerto which was premiered by the New York Philharmonic. One of his lesser known works was an operetta, *Paul Bunyan*, based on a libretto by W. H. Auden, another wartime expatriate in New York City who Britten had known back home. More importantly, another feature of Britten's American sojourn—his friendship with Pears developing into intimacy—gave rise to the greatest musical/romantic partnership of the past century.

As war ravaged Europe, Britten and Pears began to feel homesick. Steeling their nerves for tribunals as pacifists, they braved the Atlantic in early 1942. En route, Britten composed two works at the center of twentieth-century choral music: *A Ceremony of Carols* for boys' voices and harp, and *Hymn to St. Cecilia* for five-part unaccompanied chorus. The idea for a work based on the patron saint of music dated back at least to 1935, when Britten struggled to find a suitable Latin text. In 1940, Auden crafted three poems for him to set. Work began in June 1941 with an eye for performance that November by the Elizabethan Singers, an ensemble of vocal soloists including Pears. When Britten and Pears set sail on the M.S. Axel Johnson in March, Britten took with him the first two completed stanzas, which were confiscated by customs officials over-eager to find coded messages. He re-wrote the opening sections from memory and completed the work at sea on April 2, 1942. It was first performed on St. Cecilia's Day, November 22 (also Britten's birthday), in a broadcast by the BBC Singers, a small professional ensemble in which Pears had formerly sung. It is dedicated to Elizabeth Mayer, Britten's and Pears's hostess and erstwhile surrogate mother on Long Island.

The *Hymn to St. Cecilia* is set in three main sections, each closing with a variant of the "Blessed Cecilia..." refrain.

In the first section of Auden's text, Cecilia amplifies her prayer with an organ, and it is not God, but Aphrodite on her oyster shell, who responds together with the angels. This imagery links Christian allegory with Greco-Roman mythology, intertwining the centuries as a twentieth-century poet tells about a second-century Christian inventing a third-century-BC instrument to the pleasure of an even more ancient Greek goddess who appears in the manner of a fifteenth-century Botticelli painting. The first measure is in E major, yielding to C major in the second; this dichotomy is fundamental to the harmonic structure of the entire *Hymn*. But the individual chords themselves are simple triads, bright and airy. The first section and its following refrain end calmly in E major.

The central section could be the words of a composer. One wonders if Britten himself identified with the contrasts and inner conflicts: "I cannot grow", yet "I cannot err", and "I . . . can do now nothing by suffering", and finally, that desperate appeal felt by all emerging artists: "Love me." Philip Brett, a prominent English musicologist and friend of the composer, asserted that we can hear Britten's "nature in exploring without fear the things of greatest concern to him as a complicated human being without ever seeming merely confessional." Britten depicts this as a light-hearted, quicksilver scherzo, almost a dance as the voices scurry about, sometimes in canon. Britten balances these short phrases with an occasional long-note anchor-phrase in the lower voices. A playful innocence imbues text and music alike. The second refrain lands solidly in C major.

The third poem feels like a letter written by Auden (overbearing but meaning well) directly to Britten (young, struggling, insecure) as a memo of encouragement, closing with avuncular advice to "wear your tribulation like a rose", a badge of honor. Britten begins with a descending figure in the basses, akin to a walking bass line of his beloved Purcell. Moving to the other edge of the choir's register, a solo soprano takes on perhaps the role of St. Cecilia herself, floating high above the rest of the choir. Other soloists invoke the instruments Auden identifies: alto sings on a violin's open strings, bass patters on one pitch as a drum, soprano soars as a flute, tenor trumpets a fanfare. Britten's biographer Michael Kennedy views these episodes as "a hymn not so much to the sounds as to the soul of music." The final refrain settles into a gentle, holy E major.

## On Craig Ddu (1907)

Frederick Delius (1862–1934)

Frederick Delius was a spoiled brat. His father was a wealthy, German-born wool merchant in the industrial north of England, but young Fritz (the composer's birth name) displayed little interest in business. In an attempt to instill in him some kind of work ethic, he was shipped off to Florida to oversee an orange grove. He promptly failed at that too. What his family failed to notice is that he loved music—nay, he embraced, he adored, he worshiped music; music infused every fiber of his soul. He had received some basic music training as a child, and had sought further instruction in Florida, but only after his American debacle was he allowed to pursue studies at the Leipzig Conservatorium. As his personal voice evolved in the 1890s, he embraced influences from many sources, particularly Norse legend and African-American spirituals. But he received only very few performances, most of those in Germany. When in 1897 he fell in love with the painter Jelka Rosen, he joined her household at Grez-sur-Loing, fifty miles southeast of Paris. He lived there for the rest of his life, rarely visiting England.

It is no wonder, then, that his previously Germanic taste developed distinctly French flavors. The emerging, so-called impressionist, music of Debussy, Satie, and Ravel entranced Delius deeply. The first decade of the twentieth century finally brought him some success, with the operas *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1901) and *Fennimore and Gerda* (1910), large-scale choral works like *Sea Drift* (1904) and *A Mass of Life* (1905), and orchestral music such as *Brigg Fair* (1907) and *On Hearing the First Cuckoo in Spring* (1911). The conductor Thomas Beecham quickly took up the orchestral miniatures, gaining Delius some fame in his homeland. Still, during his lifetime, Delius was generally viewed by the English as an outsider, little more than a curiosity.

*On Craig Ddu* takes its text from the Welsh poet Arthur Symons; the composer adds the subtitle “An Impression of Nature”. This is a partsong in the great English tradition, but no other Englishman before or since could have written even a single bar of it. We begin comfortably in G major, but within moments Delius reveals his French proclivities with pitches that are too chromatic to fit into the stereotypically English modal scales. We lie lazily under a large fern on a mountaintop. (The Craig Ddu of the title could be a specific so-named hillock, such as that near Llanbrynmair, a village in north-central Wales, or it could be one of any number of heather-covered “black crags” in Wales.)

There are moments of text-painting: “the wind . . . blew” with a flowing melisma (many pitches to one syllable), and there is a still, sustained chord at the first reference to “silence”. The alto's final suspension seems to hang eternally; the resolution reveals a richly bleak G minor.

## Five Negro Spirituals,

from *A Child of Our Time* (1941/1958)

Sir Michael Tippett (1905–1998)

When Benjamin Britten stood for his tribunal as a conscientious objector during the Second World War, he had the good fortune of many English musical luminaries (including William Walton) speaking on his behalf. Britten's friend, Michael Tippett, had no such luck, and was sentenced to three months' imprisonment. He had long held strong left-wing political leanings, being involved in the welfare of the lower classes though his leadership in amateur music-making in the Surrey town where he lived, and teaching at London's Morley College, whose student body consisted (and still does) of working-class adults. Tippett first united his pacifism, his sense of social justice, and his musical skills in the wartime oratorio *A Child of Our Time*.

In November 1938, the seventeen-year-old Herschel Grynszpan, a Polish-Jewish refugee, assassinated a Nazi diplomat in Paris. This act inspired the German anti-Semitic pogrom known as Kristallnacht. Tippett was deeply moved by the plight of Grynszpan and others like him. He soon asked his friend, T.S. Eliot, for a libretto to a new, socially aware oratorio. Eliot demurred, stating that Tippett's ideas were so fully formed that he should write his own words, advice the composer followed for the rest of his career. Tippett painted Grynszpan as a sacrificial, Christ-like figure. The resulting *A Child of Our Time* was a kind of modern Passion. He recognized that a crucial element of Bach's great Passion settings was the interspersal of Lutheran chorales, tunes that his audience would have recognized. Tippett struggled to find a mid-twentieth-century equivalent of those chorales, until the perfect solution occurred to him: African-American spirituals. Here was a rich artistic mine from a similarly oppressed people. Immediately his oratorio gained a broader, indeed global, scope. The texts also had subversive, abolitionist undertones that matched well his left-wing sensibilities.

Nearly two decades after composing *A Child of Our Time*, he extracted the five spirituals and arranged them for

unaccompanied chorus. He often doubles the tune in octaves and transplants the original orchestral counterpoint to supporting voices. Each spiritual has song-leaders, as appropriate to the African-American plantation tradition. Tippett's arrangements are, as the composer wrote, "basically simple: the harmony, indeed, is of the simplest possible." Despite being on the whole straightforward, there are so many striking moments worth pointing out. Truly "the trumpet sounds" in "Steal away," with fanfare figures in the sopranos and altos. Note also the stark, empty octaves that ominously close "Go down, Moses." And in "Deep river," there are the repeated cries for mercy—"Lord, Lord"—even to the last moment. This is also the close of the oratorio: one kind-hearted, deeply thinking, deeply feeling man's gentle plea for peace.

### **Faire is the heaven** (1923)

Sir William Henry Harris (1883–1973)

At the age of fourteen, William Harris was appointed assistant organist at St. David's Cathedral in western Wales. He was already a noted performer upon entering the Royal College of Music in 1899. He held various positions in London, followed by a succession of ever more prestigious posts as organist and choirmaster at Lichfield Cathedral (1911), New College, Oxford (1919), and Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford (1929). He finally settled in 1933 at St. George's Chapel, the private royal chapel at Windsor Castle. In the latter post he gave the future Queen Elizabeth II weekly music lessons; it is a sign of his closeness to the royal family that she awarded him the Royal Victorian Order, a special knighthood in honor of services to the crown, in the year after her coronation. Concurrent to these church jobs, he taught at the Royal College of Music (1921–53) and became director of musical studies at the Royal School of Church Music in 1956. He retired from the RSCM and St. George's in 1961, one of the most revered figures in English church music.

Today Harris is best remembered for two double-choir motets: *Faire is the heaven* (1923) and *Bring us, O Lord God* (1959). These are very much in the tradition of music of Sir Hubert Parry, who presided at the RCM when Harris was a student. The opening word in *Faire is the heaven* is repeated, imbuing the anthem immediately with a sense of subdued awe in the unusual key of D-flat major. The two four-part choirs are mostly treated antiphonally, each group responding to music sung by the other, as Harris reserves the full power of eight voices for moments that are either especially dramatic (as at "fiery light" and "each other far excelling") or peacefully sacrosanct ("God's own person", "endless perfectness").

The shifting harmonic centers of *Faire is the heaven* are akin to a travelogue through the Christian heaven: cherubim are a bright A major, and archangels a vibrant C major, but "God's own person" returns to the becalmed D-flat major, clearly Harris's chosen key for perfection itself.

### **Where does the uttered Music go?** (1946)

Sir William Walton (1902–1983)

Born in industrial Lancashire to two voice teachers, the ten-year-old William Walton secured a post as a choirboy at Christ Church, Oxford. The cathedral choir stalls thus provided his seminal education. During the height of the First World War, Walton transferred from the cathedral choir school to an undergraduacy at the university, where he fell under the spell of the three Sitwell siblings, all notorious writers of the lesser nobility. Leaving Oxford without a degree, he lodged with the Sitwells in the roaring London of the 1920s. The chamber work *Façade* (1922) gained mild notoriety, but it was not until he composed three orchestral masterpieces—the Viola Concerto (1929), the cantata *Belshazzar's Feast* (1931), and the First Symphony (1935)—that his reputation was secure. The late 1930s saw two prominent commissions: *Crown Imperial* (1937), a march for the coronation of George VI, and a Violin Concerto (1939) for Jascha Heifetz. Walton passed the Second World War composing music for propagandistic films, notably Laurence Olivier's revered *Henry V* (1944).

In August 1944, the great conductor Henry Wood died. He was one of the most prominent figures in English music, having established the popular (and still ongoing) summertime Promenade Concerts. In that capacity he championed the works of many emerging composers, Walton among them. Walton was asked to write a choral work for the unveiling of a memorial window at St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate, the large church in the central London neighborhood of Holborn where Wood had played organ in his youth. The new music was to accompany a newly written poem by John Masefield, the official Poet Laureate. The two struggled for a time to find words that Walton felt he could set to music; Masefield in fact prepared six options. Walton had begun two different settings, but was satisfied with neither, and even suggested writing a work for strings instead. (He was at the time also working on his brilliant String Quartet in A minor.) Masefield, however, was impressively patient, and finally crafted the current poem, titled *Sir Henry Wood*. Walton preferred to title the music with the first line of the poem: *Where does the uttered Music go?*

Walton begins with a D-major triad, but immediately places under it a B-flat; such dissonant but gentle harmonies are a mainstay in Walton's writing, but especially in this work. For example, the mystical sonority that concludes "What is this creature, Music," is merely an inverted D-major triad with a dissonant C-sharp. As befitting a former cathedral chorister, Walton handles the voices expertly. Usually the three women's parts function as a unit, with either the bass or tenor lines set apart in range or rhythm. The chorus dramatically divides into eight overlapping parts to invoke "everlasting thanks." "All that he uttered" returns to the music of the opening, though slightly modified; Walton rarely, in any of his scores, repeats himself verbatim. As a final apotheosis, on the text "O Mortals, praise him," Walton divides the choir into sixteen voices, in what Christopher Palmer eloquently describes as an "ecstatic, starbursting climax [with] voices colliding and commingling and coalescing like some great cosmic firework-display." That Henry Wood should have inspired such a musical memorial is a sign of his importance to Walton and to British musical life in general; any musician would be fortunate to be found so worthy.

*"It's just as difficult to overcome success  
as it is to overcome failure." -William Walton*

### **Serenade to Music** (1938)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

That paragon of English pastoral music, Ralph Vaughan Williams, came not from country folk, but from prominent lawyers, plus the wealthy Wedgwood and Darwin families. (In later life he would tell stories about his eccentric great-uncle, Charles Darwin.) He began composing while young, and knew that music would be his vocation, but his skill developed only very, very slowly; one cousin recounted overhearing his Cambridge associates say that "he was so hopelessly bad at it." Vaughan Williams later took on private tutelage from two of the most eminent Continental composers: Max Bruch and Maurice Ravel, who once quipped, "Of all my pupils, he's the only one who doesn't sound like Ravel." He gained a modicum of success with some songs and incidental music written for Cambridge plays, but essentially toiled in obscurity until the Leeds Festival premiered *A Sea Symphony*, a massive choral work on texts by Walt Whitman, in 1910. After the First World War, he developed his reputation as a leading composer of operas, symphonies, ballet, concertos, and choral works with or without orchestra.

As with so many English composers, Vaughan Williams owed a great debt to the conductor Henry Wood. (William Walton was another; see the note above.) The fiftieth anniversary of Wood's conducting debut was cause for grand celebration. Vaughan Williams took the unconventional step of composing a work for orchestra and sixteen vocal soloists, each of whom was closely identified with Wood. Indeed, he wrote for their specific voices, giving each a brief solo moment tailored to fit each singer's strengths. In the published scores, the parts are even identified by the initials of the original sixteen. The orchestra includes a prominent role for the concertmaster (the lead violinist). Our performance will use the published vocal score, which reduces the orchestra for the piano, with violin soloist added.

The text of *Serenade to Music* is from *The Merchant of Venice*, as Lorenzo woos Jessica with admiration of moonlight and the music wafting from indoors. Later Portia and her servant enter and make their own commentary. Vaughan Williams has carefully cobbled lines from four different characters so they feel like a seamless whole, one mind's commentary on music and the night. The music is in a comfortable D major, the same key of Vaughan Williams's plaintive Fifth Symphony, which he had just begun. Structurally, there is little say. I encourage the listener merely to sit back, relax, and "let the sounds of music creep in [your] ears."

### **Mater ora filium** (1921)

Sir Arnold Bax (1883–1953)

Arnold Bax, like Delius and Vaughan Williams described above, didn't really need to work at all. His family was independently wealthy, and indeed he lived off of his familial income all his life. But he, again like Delius and Vaughan Williams, was devoted to music, studying at the Royal Academy of Music in London. His compositions gained almost no attention, but he did develop a reputation as a pianist; it was said that he could sight-read a full orchestral score better than anyone in England. More important to him, however, was his newly discovered passion for Ireland. He even wrote poems, plays, and prose under an Irish pseudonym. The 1910s, the decade that destroyed so many of his similarly-aged compatriots during war, saw Bax honing his skills with a series of orchestral tone-poems, of which *Tintagel* (1919) is one of the greatest of English masterpieces.

In 1921, Bax heard a private performance of William Byrd's Mass for five voices, then almost entirely forgotten. This Renaissance masterwork inspired him to try an unaccompanied

choral work himself. He chose a little-known anonymous text found in a medieval manuscript housed at Balliol College, Oxford. The text is sacred, written for Christmas, alternating a Latin refrain with English verses. We begin in Latin, with a somewhat archaic feel thanks to four-part choir with some mild doubling and much parallel motion. Tenors then ask the maiden who is her newborn, and sopranos and altos reply that it is a king's son. The return of the opening refrain is more elaborate though sung by only half the choir, below a floating soprano descant. All voices come together for the second English section. The voicing gets gradually more complex, expanding into two choirs, then further dividing within those choirs. Filigrees of "Alleluia" flutter about at the appearance of the Magi. At the acclamation of Jesus as "King of kings and Lord of right," Bax assigns the sopranos a brilliantly dramatic (and fiendishly difficult) high C lasting three long, slow measures. The music settles briefly into a chant-like appeal that Mary may pray for us mortals, but soon Bax is back to the grand statement. The final chord, spanning beyond three octaves, is as glorious an "Amen" as William Byrd or anyone else has ever composed.



visit our web site for venue and program details  
[www.CascadianChorale.org](http://www.CascadianChorale.org)

### **A Winter's Night**

Saturday, Dec. 10, 7:30 pm – Medina  
 Sunday, Dec. 11, 3:30 pm – Medina

### **Cascadian Composers**

Saturday, April 22, 7:30 pm – Redmond  
 Sunday, April 23, 3:30 pm – Medina

### **Beloved**

*in collaboration with the Sacramento Master Singers*  
 Saturday, June 24, 7:30 pm – Medina  
 Sunday, June 25, 3:30 pm – Vancouver, BC

# Cascadian Chorale

Gary D. Cannon, Artistic Director

## OUR STORY



In December 2015, conductor Gary D. Cannon invited singer and arts administrator J. Scott Kovacs to embark on a new artistic partnership. This was to be a fully professional choir that engaged the best ensemble singers in the Seattle area. Unlike all other professional choirs in the region, the ensemble would present music from every period in music history. But this music was not to be limited to concert-going audiences. Rather, Cannon's vision was also to bring the music to those places and people that wouldn't normally be exposed to this art: to schools, prisons, homeless shelters, and elder-care facilities.

After that conversation at a Starbucks in Shoreline, Washington, both Cannon and Kovacs began to consider in earnest how such an ensemble could come about. A name was chosen: the Emerald Ensemble. The emerald was selected as a symbol not only for its connection with Seattle, the so-called Emerald City, but also because as a jewel that represented beauty, depth, richness of color, fine craft, and overall excellence.

In March 2016, Kovacs, who was to be the organization's Executive Director, began the foundation of the new ensemble in earnest. Legal and financial paperwork was filed. The newly established company formed a fiscal sponsorship with the Byrd Ensemble, allowing the reception of tax-deductible contributions. A generous local donor underwrote the first several months of expenses, and fund-raising events were held. As Cannon and Kovacs began talking with their musical colleagues and making Facebook posts about the new organization, buzz flitted about Seattle's choral community. Finally, the Emerald Ensemble officially launched its online presence with a new website designed by Joe Farmer of WhizBang Studio, Inc. The inaugural season was announced, consisting of the six Bach motets in one concert—a veritable choral Everest—and a performance of early twentieth-century English music, for which Cannon had developed a local reputation.

In order to ensure that this history can continue into the future, please consider the ways that you can support the Emerald Ensemble in its mission to improve lives through choral music performed with passion and skill.

# OUR DONORS

## FOUNDER'S CIRCLE

(Extraordinary Gifts: \$1,000 or more)

Gary and Marnie Cannon  
Doug Wyatt and Maureen Stone

## SEASON SUSTAINERS

(Enthusiastic Gifts of Support: \$250 - \$999)

Jo Ann and Tom Bardeen  
Mary and Whit Carhart  
Katy and Peter Dorman  
Bud and Jill Floyd  
Susan Hedrick and Benno Bonkowski

Heather Houston and Bob Gibbs  
Gay and Neil Jungemann  
Leslie McIntosh  
David and Sheri Nichols  
Kathy Robbs

## FRIENDS

(Gifts of Friendship and Appreciation up to \$249)

Ron Anderson and Jon Tsou  
Karen Baer and Richard Wallace  
Carol and George Butler  
Gene Carlson  
Edna and Jim Dam  
Shannon Flora  
Rebekah Gilmore  
Stephanie and Dick Gordon

Charles and Charlotte Lovekin  
Mary Fran Lyons and Jim Roy  
Margie Morgan and Jim Cross  
Cynthia Perkins and Michael Shook  
Kathleen Rindge  
Marta Schee  
Vashon Island Chorale  
Robert Weltzien

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RON ANDERSON, *Photographer*  
BYRD ENSEMBLE, Markdavin Obenza, *Fiscal Sponsor*  
CASCADIAN CHORALE, *Artistic Partner*  
BARBARA LEIGH, *Incorporation Assistance*  
SEATTLE CHORAL COMPANY, Freddie Coleman, *Facilities / Artistic Partner*  
TRINTIY EPISCOPAL PARSH, Sister Jo Baim  
TURI HENDERSON, *Season Graphics*  
VASHON CENTER FOR THE ARTS, Stephen Jeong, *Director of Performing Arts*  
VASHON ISLAND CHORALE, *Artistic Partner*  
WHIZBANG STUDIOS, Joe Farmer, *Website Design*

# THE PERFORMING ARTISTS



Charles Austin Roberts  
*Bass-Baritone*



Julia Benzinger  
*Mezzo-Soprano*



Gus Blazek  
*Bass*



Holly Boaz  
*Soprano*



Erika Chang  
*Soprano*



Orrin Doyle  
*Tenor*



Michael Dudley  
*Baritone*



Rebekah Gilmore  
*Soprano*



Jonathan Graber  
*Violin*



Emily Hendrix  
*Soprano*



David Hendrix  
*Tenor*



Brandon Higa  
*Tenor*



Dustin Kaspar  
*Tenor*



Christine Knackstedt  
*Mezzo-Soprano*



Scott Kovacs  
*Bass-Baritone*



Sid Law  
*Tenor*



Fred McIlroy  
*Tenor*



Kathryn Miller  
*Mezzo-Soprano*



Tyler Morse  
*Countertenor*



Lisa Cardwell Pontén  
*Soprano*



Andrew Seifert  
*Piano*



Jonathan Silvia  
*Bass*



Charles Robert Stephens  
*Baritone*



Linda Strandberg  
*Soprano*



Heidi Vanderford  
*Mezzo-Soprano*



Kathryn Weld  
*Mezzo-Soprano*

**Seattle Choral Company**  
SEASON 2016-2017  
Celebrating 35 Years of Beautiful Music

Wintertide: A concert fantasy for the holiday season  
December 9 & 10, 2016

Peaceable Kingdom: The American 20<sup>th</sup> century  
March 25, 2017

Mozart Requiem: The last testament  
May 19, 20, & 21, 2017

A Toast to the SCC! 35 years of beautiful music  
June 17, 2017

Visit us at [www.seattlechoralcompany.org](http://www.seattlechoralcompany.org) for more informati

VASHON ISLAND CHORALE  
DR. GARY D. CANNON, CONDUCTOR

**VICTORY & BEAUTY**  
HAYDN'S LORD NELSON MASS & KAPLAN'S SONG OF SONGS

APRIL 29 @ 7:30PM | APRIL 30 @ 3:00PM  
PRECONCERT LECTURES 45 MINUTES PRIOR TO CONCERT START

VASHON CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
TICKETS: [VASHONCENTERFORTHHEARTS.ORG](http://VASHONCENTERFORTHHEARTS.ORG)  
OR IN PERSON AT HERON'S NEST AND VCA

CULTURE VASHON ISLAND CHORALE VASHON CENTER FOR THE ARTS