

A Letter from the Conductor

Shalom! We are happy that you are here to share the Peace, Hope and Love of our music with us! We all want and need to be present to the love and light that is always surrounding us, even in times of difficulty and when we cannot “feel” it. If we can, we then shine with that light and pass it on. A normal song is about 3 minutes. So short but so powerful. We hope you will be present for each minute of this beautiful music, rich with melodies, harmonies and rhythm that help us to de-stress and relax and become aware of the beauty in our lives.

It has been a joy and privilege to direct and conduct this small family of friends for the past 30 years! I cannot think of anything else that I would rather do. In fact, I pray that Cantabile Chamber Chorale continues to sing for another 30 years, beyond my time on this earth. We began as young adults, looking for the joy of continuing to sing after our academic pursuits and we created a singing family. We continue to be available for those who wish to be part of an intimate group of singers. We want to know and grow with each other and to become part of each other’s families. We have achieved this joy. We wish it to continue with the generations of young singers who are just beginning their singing lives. As singers, we want and need to have a singing family to balance the stress of living and working responsibilities. Putting poetry to melody and harmony is the most popular form of musical entertainment. Classical, popular or jazz forms, all entertain and enlighten. The singing voice has a connection to the human heart. Giving voice to the poets of today and yesterday, through the musical thoughts of today’s and yesterday’s composers, we create a loving, hopeful and peaceful environment.

I want to personally thank each of you for joining us tonight, for supporting Cantabile by buying tickets, sponsoring program ads, and making donations. We could not do it without you!

Rebecca Scott

Rebecca Scott,
Cantabile Chamber Chorale Conductor and Artistic Director

PEACE HOPE LOVE

PROGRAM NOTES by Rebecca Scott

Our program features diverse sounds and colorful timbres. Selections range from Gustav Holst's setting of Psalm 148 to the famous hymn tune *Lasst Uns Erfreuen*, to a unique and beautiful arrangement of *See Amid the Winter Snow* by contemporary composer Dan Forrest. Several movements from the *The Peacemakers*, by Welsh composer Karl Jenkins, extoll world peace, while Jake Runestad's *The Hope of Loving* comprises six settings of mystical poems exploring the idea of love and its manifestation in our lives. Mack Wilberg's *Light Dawns on a Weary World* sets the theme of the concert: the joy of *Peace, Hope and Love* blooming in a weary world. Two songs round out our program: Ēriks Ešvalds' *O Salutaris Hostia* featuring high soprano solos is a prayer for help in time of great need, and Dan Elder's quiet *Sunrise Carol*, "is a love song to nature, and to the feeling of rebirth upon witnessing the resplendence of daybreak." Our songs create Peace, Hope and Love for us as singers and for those who come to listen. Piano, organ, string quartet, woodwinds, and percussion accompany the singers to surround and enhance the vocal vibrations!

Our opening song, *Light Shines on a Weary World*, by Mack Wilberg carries us along a bumpy path in 7/8 time, to awaken to the light that shines in and on all of us.

Jake Runestad's choral cycle, *The Hope of Loving*, with string quartet and soprano and baritone soloists, celebrates through six movements the love that is gifted to us from the Creator. The texts are taken from a volume of poems translated by Daniel Ladinsky (b. 1948), American poet and interpreter of mystical poetry, *Love Poems from God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West*. The recurring melody searches, rising and falling, as the couple express the joy of their commitment to each other with the chorus supporting and commenting on that love. The sopranos' opening statement is in the words of Rabia Basri (717-801), Muslim saint and Sufi mystic: "I know about love the way the fields know about light." Be present to the light! The second movement, evoking a sound like stampeding horses, uses the words of St. Francis of Assisi, the Catholic saint associated with the natural environment and the patronage of animals: "There are beautiful wild forces within us." The short third movement, set for tenor solo and a smile, uses the words of the 14th century Persian poet Hafiz (Shams-ud-din Muhammad Hafiz, (c. 1320-1389). It maintains the feeling of the natural environment through rising and falling scales, trills, and hopping intervals of thirds and fourths. What kind of creatures are these? The string quartet has its "say" in the fourth movement, beginning "dark and heavy" but then creates light and hope using the original "love" melody. In the fifth movement, the voices of the solo duet return using the words of St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), a Spanish mystic and poet, Roman Catholic Saint, Carmelite friar and priest. Love sees through the veil that separates us from the next world. The last movement begins appropriately in choral style in four to six vocal parts, all joining in unity of rhythm and harmony. The words are by Meister Eckhart von Hochheim (c. 1260-1328), German theologian, philosopher and mystic. "What keeps us alive? It is the hope of loving, of being loved." The finale ends on a unison note with the solo voice of the violin creating the ascending third of the major scale, allowing the light to shine through.

Gustav Holst's arrangement of *Psalm 148* begins slowly and softly builds through scales in thirds, rising and falling to a glorious climax of sound in praise of the Almighty. The Psalm calls on all God's creation to rise in thanks and praise creating a vision of light, glory and love. A perfect Thanksgiving Psalm!

See Amid the Winter's Snow, Dan Forrest's unique arrangement of the Christmas carol "Humility" by John Goss (1871) with text by Edward Caswall (1858) features percussion sounds, string quartet and piano, creating a plethora of beautiful sounds to accompany the chorale.

O Salutaris Hostia is the last stanza of the hymn "Verbum Supernum Prodiens" (The heavenly Word proceeding forth, Yet leaving not his Father's side) by St. Thomas Aquinas (c.1225-1274). It is a prayer for aid

and strength in a time of war and trouble. Ēriks Ešēvalds (b. 1977), Latvian composer, creates a sense of security and peace by his setting the chorus in a chant of soft chords of eight voices in seventh chords under soprano soloists in ecstatic duets.

American composer and poet Daniel Elder (b. 1986) states that the *Sunrise Carol* is a “love song to nature and to the feeling of rebirth upon witnessing the resplendence of daybreak.” His poem is styled after the romantic medieval ballades of Machaut and his contemporary composer-poets.

Welsh composer and musician Sir Karl Jenkins (b 1944) is an artist who expresses himself in multiple genres - classical, rock and jazz - and by playing oboe, saxophone and keyboards. He teaches, conducts, composes, and arranges diverse music with beautiful melodies, rhythms of the world, various languages and styles. He is prolific and has reached generations of listeners and musicians with his flexible compositions, which can be performed in various ways. Our four selections are from his 17-movement oratorio, *The Peacemakers*, first performed in 2012 at Carnegie Hall, New York City in support of GlobalSingforPeace.org

I Offer You Peace, text by Mahatma Gandhi, and **Healing Light: A Celtic Prayer** (text Anon) have the lilting melodies and rhythms of Celtic music. The bodhran (Irish drum), soprano saxophone and solo flute create an authentic sound base for the singers’ melodies and tonal harmonies. Jenkins changes the tonic key center to create variety and enhance the emotional arch of the phrases. The traditional Latin hymn *Dona Nobis Pacem* (Give us Peace) is combined with words by Bahá’u’lláh (1817–1892), the founder of the Baha’i Faith, “The world is but one country.” Everyone is singing in one key and in one rhythm with each other. We create the sound of peace, brotherhood, and love that we all seek. Soprano descants affirm the words. In **Anthem: Peace, triumphant peace**, peace is presented as a triumphant feat having been completed already! We celebrate with a march of triumph in triple time, as a dance. My favorite part is the middle section where the soprano and altos sing in harmony to the words of Anne Frank: “How wonderful it is that no one need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.” These precede the words of St. Seraphim of Sarov, the most renowned Saint of the Eastern Orthodox Church: “Embrace the spirit of peace and thousands of souls around you will be saved.” We celebrate the presence of peace, hope and love within you. Namaste!