

ROMANCE and RHYTHM

PROGRAM NOTES by Rebecca Scott

Cantabile's concerts this season are in memory of Lloyd Arriola (1971-2016), our former accompanist from 2001 - 2008. The first half of the program is filled with music of the Romantic period - beautifully extended harmonies using 7th and 9th chords, multi vocal lines in five or more parts, expressive rubato (rhythmically free) phrases and extreme dynamics from very soft to very loud. The second half of the program emphasizes pulsing rhythmic pieces with natural percussive sounds and instruments, dance rhythms and patter sounds (repeated rhythmic patterns in fast tempi). The program ends with the inspiring words of Horace Everett to the music of Aaron Copland who has vividly expressed the positive, hopeful, loving character that we wish for America: "The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving is born of our loving our friends and our labor!"

Christina Rossetti's (1830-1894) poem *Rest* is a prayer celebrating the beauty of eternity. It is neither a grieving nor a longing for life to continue, but an acceptance of the relief from the weariness of "watching, Earth." Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1894) set *Rest* as a lullaby or slow waltz, in 3/4 meter with five voices singing a cappella (without accompaniment), as if standing at the body of the loved one meditating on the new journey where "darkness [is] more clear than noon-day" and "silence more musical than any song." When life becomes a burden, death is a gift. Stillness, even of the ceased heart, is "almost Paradise." The song is in major, not the minor key of sadness, with soothing, rising and falling lines in each voice and seventh chords suspending over long cadences (phrase endings). There are no sudden rhythmic impulses nor dynamic outbursts of sadness, but instead the excitement of waking into eternity.

*O Earth, lie heavily upon her eyes;
Seal her sweet eyes weary of watching, Earth;
Lie close around her; leave no room for mirth
With its harsh laughter, nor for sound of sighs.
She hath no questions, she hath no replies,
Hushed in and curtained with a blessed dearth
Of all that irked her from the hour of birth;
With stillness that is almost Paradise.
Darkness more clear than noon-day holdeth her,
Silence more musical than any song;
Even her very heart has ceased to stir:
Until the morning of Eternity
Her rest shall not begin nor end, but be;
And when she wakes she will not think it long.*

Requiem, Op. 48 by Gabriel Fauré is an acknowledged masterpiece and a favorite of choirs worldwide. The composition of the seven movements occurred over thirty years of Fauré's life beginning with the *Libera Me*, composed in 1877 for baritone solo and organ, ostensibly for Fauré's church where he directed. Tonight, we perform three of the movements. The *Pie Jesu* was probably written for a boy soprano soloist. We have three sopranos singing in echo phrases. The beautiful and low string solo in the *Agnus Dei*, flows with a consoling feeling holding together the vocal parts while it winds around and throughout. Fauré lost both parents (within two years) between 1885 and 1887 which no doubt gave him the inspiration to compose this "petit Requiem" as he described it to a friend. He chose to

leave out the usually loud and strong *Dies Irae* (Day of Judgment). Therefore, this “petit Requiem” has a quiet feeling of acceptance and reverence.

Pie Jesu

Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis requiem
dona eis requiem sempiternam requiem

*Merciful Jesus, Lord, grant them rest
grant them rest, eternal rest.*

Agnus Dei

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi
dona eis requiem, sempiternam requiem
Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine
Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
quia pius es
Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis

*O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin
of the world, grant them rest
O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin
of the world, grant them rest, eternal rest
May eternal light shine on them, O Lord,
with Thy saints forever,
because Thou art merciful.
Grant them eternal rest, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine on them.*

In Paradisum

In Paradisum deducant Angeli in tuo
adventu suscipiant te Martyres
et perducant te in civitatem sanctam
Jerusalem

*May the angels receive them in Paradise,
at thy coming may the martyrs receive
thee and bring thee into the holy city
Jerusalem*

Jerusalem
Chorus Angelorum te suscipit
et cum Lazaro quondam paupere
aeternam habeas requiem
Aeternam habeas requiem

*Jerusalem
There may the chorus of angels receive
thee, and with Lazarus, once a beggar,
may thou have eternal rest.
May thou have eternal rest.*

How Lovely Is Thy Dwelling Place, by Johannes Brahms, is from his German Requiem, Op. 45. It is one of the most performed movements of this beloved choral piece, often sung in English (by church choirs throughout the English-speaking world.) Rising vocal lines extolling the beauty of heaven float upward and sound like they are going to heaven! Lines with more jagged motion express anxiety and the longing for the “courts of the Lord” and the “living God”. Blest are they that already dwell there! A short rising phrase of “praise” alternates with a counter-melody of running eighth notes, panting up and then down as if trying to reach heaven. This little fugal section resolves into peace “evermore” before returning to the original melody and statement: *How Lovely is thy Dwelling Place, Oh Lord!*

How lovely is Thy dwelling place, O Lord of Hosts!
For my soul, it longeth, yet fainteth for the courts of
the Lord; my soul and body crieth out, yea, for the
living God. O blest are they that dwell within Thy
house; they praise Thy name evermore!

Wie lieblich sind Deine Wohnungen, Herr Zebaoth!
Meine Seele verlanget und sehnet sich nach den
Vorhöfen des Herrn; Mein Leib und Seele freuen sich
in dem lebendigen Gott. Wohl denen, die in Deinem
Hause wohnen, die loben Dich immerdar.

Our centerpiece tonight is Ralph Vaughan Williams’ ***Serenade to Music***, composed in 1938 at the request of Sir. Henry J. Wood for a performance to mark the 50th anniversary of his debut as a conductor. The original singers were 16 soloists that had sung with Sir Henry many times. Vaughan Williams composed a short solo part for each of them. The fact that this beautiful piece was written for a chamber chorus of singers with solo capabilities interested me in programming the piece. Cantabile is fortunate to have some beautiful solo voices with high and low ranges. We are using 17 soloists and the violin, cello and piano version. The piece was set for orchestra without voices in 1939 and the rich

harmonies and constantly changing key relationships make it a beautifully romantic piece for any combination of voices and/or instruments. The lyrics are taken from Act V, Scene 1 of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. The dialogue discusses how beautifully sweet music sounds under the stars without the noises of the day interrupting. "Soft stillness and the night become the touches of sweet harmony." Reference is made to the Greek myth of Diana and Endymion. Diana was the goddess of hunting: "Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:" We hear the hunting horns in the piano. Endymion, a shepherd, would sleep on the mountaintop where he guarded his sheep. Diana fell in love with his beauty and would come and kiss him while he slept. Unaware, Endymion considered this a dream and preferred to sleep rather than fulfill his daily chores." Peace, ho! The moon sleeps with Endymion, and would not be awak'd!") "The man that hath no music in himself" is considered dark as the Greek Erebus (of the underworld).

SERENADE TO MUSIC (William Shakespeare, c1564-1616, *The Merchant of Venice*)

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 that thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst the muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly closet in, we cannot hear it.
Come ho! And wake Diana 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 mov'd with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are as dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus;
Let no such man be trusted.
Music! Hark!...It is the 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,
And would not be awak'd!
...Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Steven V. Taylor created *Swing Lo/Swing Down*, with a gospel feel in its rhythmic and harmonic texture, by recomposing the well-known spiritual, *Swing Low Sweet Chariot*.

This arrangement of *Son de Camaguey* by Canadian composer Stephen Hatfield (b. 1956), uses the syncopation that is normally found in every song in Cuba. The *Son* is one of two basic dance forms in traditional Cuban music. *Son* means “rhythmic sound”. The rhythm of the *Son* is similar to the foxtrot, in 2/2 meter with steps: slow, fast, fast, slow, fast, fast. Cuban musicians play in a very fluid style with constant syncopation in all instruments and voices. The lyrics tell of the beauty of the coastline in the area of Camaguey in South Eastern Cuba.

Leron, Leron Sinta (Leron, My Dear) is a popular folk song from the Tagalog region of the Philippines, which is taught to all children there, at home and in school. Our version is a choral setting by Filipino composer Saunder Choi that is reminiscent of childhood playfulness. The lyrics tell about a man named “Leron” and his sweetheart “Neneng” as they flirt and tease each other while gathering tamarind fruits in the orchard. There is talk of the threat of her falling from the swaying branches and some bragging about his virility. We first performed this piece in our December 2016 program as part of our performance with the *University of the Philippines Alumni & Friends Rondalla*. It is such a fun and energetic song that we repeat it (once more) today to honor and remember Lloyd Arriola.

Moira Smiley wrote this arrangement of *Bring me little water Silvy*, by composer Huddie William Ledbetter (“Lead Belly” 1888-1949)

Ledbetter, better known as Leadbelly, composed some of the most beloved American songs, and performed, in his own folk blues style. He became famous with the folk movement of the 1930s and 1940s by recording for the Lomax Collections. This song is said to have been written about his Uncle and his Uncle’s wife, Silvy. This version takes much of its musical choices from *Sweet Honey in the Rock*’s version. Body percussion is adapted from choreography of Evie Ladin.

We are delighted that Jennifer Emery and her Concert Choir from New Brunswick High School are able to join us again this spring. We are also thrilled to sing the arrangements of *Tres Canciones Populares Mexicanas* that were commissioned from Marco-Adrian Ramos by The New Brunswick Education Foundation. It was exciting to introduce Mr. Ramos to Mrs. Emery and her choir. In February, Mr. Ramos met with the choir and the students were very interested in hearing him talk about his life. They were fascinated to hear what it is like to be a composer and a performing musician.

Las Chiapanecas (the beautiful women from Chiapas) has a melody by Bulmaro López Fernández (1878-1960) and text by Juan Arozamena Sanchez (1899-1926). This song is well known to many generations of school children here and in Mexico. The lover rides his horse to the dance, where his love is waiting at night. “Dance my beautiful Chiapas woman!” The piano accompaniment emphasizes the strong downbeat of the dance in 6/8 meter but is quiet “when the night, with its blue cloak arrives” and we just hear the heels of the dancers snapping (two claps representing the dancing shoes). The full chords of the piano part tell us that this dance hall has more than the usual guitars and accordion playing!

Las Chiapanecas

Melody by Bulmaro Lopez Fernandez (1878-1960)

Text by Juan Arozamena Sanchez (1899-1926)

Un clavel corté
Por la sierra azul,
Caminito de mi rancho
Como el viento fue

*I plucked a carnation
Through the blue mountain range
Down the little road to my ranch
Like the wind*

Mi caballo fiel
A llevarme hasta su lado

*My faithful horse went
To bring me to its side*

Linda flor de abril
Toma este clavel
Que te brindo con passion
No me digas no,
Que en tu boca está
El secreto de mi amor

*Lovely flower of April
Take this carnation
Which I bring to you with passion
Do not say no to me
For in your mouth
Is the secret of my love*

Cuando la noche llegó
Y con su manta de azul
El blanco rancho cubrió
Alegre el baile empezó

*When the the night arrived
And with its blue cloak,
Covered the white ranch
Joyfully the dance began*

Baila, mi chiapaneca
Baila, baila con garbo
Baila, suave rayo de luz;
Baila, mi chiapaneca
Baila, baila con garbo
Que en el baila la reina eres tú.

*Dance my chaipas woman
Dance, dance with grace
Dance, soft ray of light,
Dance my chaipas woman
Dance, dance with grace
For at this dance you are the queen.*

La Sandunga is a traditional Mexican waltz, which takes its style from the Spanish jota. (danced throughout Spain.) It is in 3/4 or 6/8 with the lyrics in eight syllable groups. The melody is thought to have originated from Andalusia in Spain. Zapotec is a language spoken by the Zapotec indigenous Mexican group in the state of Oaxaca. This style of music is very popular amongst that ethnic group, and this tune is probably the most famous example of that style of music from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec (the skinny part of Mexico between the two oceans). There are many settings and interpretations of this song as well as a variety of translations of the word *Sandunga*: “party”, “wit”, “attractive”. Tonight’s setting has a sultry feeling of attraction and romance. The beautiful woman ignores the lover’s advances and he is driven to outbursts of passion and frustration as she plays with his feelings. The piano introduction almost sounds like it is coming from a saloon parlor! It then skips and hops around the keyboard like the dancer, coming close enough to swish her skirt in her lover’s face and then flitting away like a bird in flight, untouchable.

La Sanduga

Antenoche fui a tu casa,
Tres golpes le di al candado
Tú no sirves para amores
Tienes el sueño pesado

*The night before last, I went to your
house
Three times I knocked
You're no good when it comes to love
You're deep in sleep*

Ay! Sandunga,
Sandunga mama por Dios
Sandunga, no seas ingrante,
Mamá de mi corazón .
Ay! Sanduga si,
Ay! Sandunga no
Ay! Sandunga mamápor Dios
Ay! Sandunga si,
Ay! Sandunga no
Ay! Mama de mi corazón
Me ofreciste acompañarme
Desde la iglesia a mi choza
Pero como no llegaste
Tuve que venirme solo.

*Oh! Sandunga
Sanduga, by God, woman
Sanduga, don't be ungrateful
Woman of my heart
Oh! Sandunga yes,
Oh! Sandunga no,
Oh! Sandunga, by God, woman
Oh! Sandunga yes,
Oh! Sandunga no,
Oh! Woman of my heart
You offered to accompany me
From church to my shack
But you never came
I had to come back alone.*

La Rana (*The frog*) is like every children's patter song, helping them to remember how to put things in order. In this version, the frog is sitting in the water singing. As each animal comes along to the water to sing, they quiet the animal before them and so the line goes on and on at a very fast clip until the mother-in-law sings last. [Other children's versions use different words at the end.] Mr. Ramos composes a piano accompaniment to this favorite children's song of his, which is at one point race-car fast and at other points, angry, jubilant and wild. The unifying element for the voices and piano is the unison [all singing one note] on the word "AGUA" (on a recurring A.) At two points, the voices separate into two clashing chords, the first time a whole step apart and the second time a half step apart. This is as dissonant as tonal music gets. He revels in the dissonance, as if all the animals have gradually climbed on top of each other and are singing loudly together in a cacophony of sound. Needless to say, neither the pattering Spanish words nor the piano part is easy but they are very entertaining. Finally, all the voices join together in an a cappella [without accompaniment], polyrhythmic ending for "¡Ni el miso diable la pudo callar!" (The Devil himself could not shut [the mother-in-law] up!)

La Rana

Estaba la rana sentada cantando debajo del
agua,
Cuando la rana se puso a cantar
Vino la mosca y la hizo callar
La mosca a la rana.....cuando la
mosca se puso a cantar, vino la araña y la
hizo callar

*The frog was sitting under the
water,
When the frog began to sing,
The fly came and shut it up
The fly to the frogwhen the fly
began to sing, the spider came and
shut it up*

La araña a la mosca, la mosca a la rana.....cuando la araña se puso a cantar, vino la rata y la hizo callar
La rata a la rana la araña a la mosca, la mosca a la rana.....cuando la rata se puso a cantar, vino el gato y la hizo callar

*The spider to the fly, the fly to the frog.....when the spider began to sing, the rat came and shut it up
The rat to the spider, the spider to the fly, the fly to the frog.....when the rat began to sing, the cat came and shut it up*

El gato a la rata la rata a la rana la araña a la mosca a la rana..... cuando el gato se puso a cantar, vino el perro y lo hizo callar

*The cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the frog...
When the cat began to sing, the dog came and shut it up*

El perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña a la mosca a la rana.....cuando el perro se puso a cantar, vino el palo y lo hizo callar

The dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the frog.....when the dog began to sing, the stick came and shut it up.

El palo al perro el perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña la araña a la mosca la mosca a la rana...cuando el palo se puso a cantar, vino el fuego y lo hizo callar

The stick to the dog the dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the frog...

El fuego al palo el palo al perro el perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña la araña a la mosca la mosca a la rana.....

*When the stick began to sing, the fire came and shut it up.
The fire to the stick the stick to the dog the dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the frog... when the fire began to sing, the water came and shut it up.*

cuando el fuego se puso a cantar, vino el agua y lo hizo callar.

El agua al fuego el fuego al palo el palo al perro el perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña la araña a la mosca la mosca a la rana.....cuando el agua se puso a cantar, vino el hombre y lo hizo callar.

The water to the fire the fire to the stick the stick to the dog the dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the frog....when the water began to sing, the man came and it shut it up.

El hombre al agua el agua al fuego el fuego al palo el palo al perro el perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña la araña a la mosca la mosca a la ranacuando el hombre se puso a cantar, vino la suegra y lo hizo callar.

The man to the water the water to the fire the fire to the stick the stick to the dog the dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider to the fly the fly to the frog....when the man began to sing, the mother-in-law came and shut him up.

La suegra al hombre el hombre al agua el agua al fuego el fuego al palo el palo al perro el perro al gato el gato a la rata la rata a la araña la araña a la mosca la mosca a la ranacuando la suegra se puso a cantar, Ni el mismo diablo la pudo callar!

The mother-in-law to the man the man to the water the water to the fire the fire to the stick the stick to the dog the dog to the cat the cat to the rat the rat to the spider the spider to the fly the fly to the

*frog.....when she began to sing, the
devil himself could not shut her up!*

The Promise of Living is titled the *Thanksgiving Song*. It is taken from the opera, *The Tender Land* composed between 1952 and 1954 by Aaron Copland with words by Horace Everett (a pseudonym for Erik Johns). The opera tells of a farm family in the Midwest USA whose daughter is graduating from high school and leaving home. It was written for the NBC Television Opera Workshop but was never produced until years later and only recorded in 2000. This edition has a piano accompaniment for four hands and five voice parts. The meter changes constantly from 4/4 to 3/2 and back and then to 3/4 and 12/8. The first melody flows like a folk song with inspiring words: “The promise of living with hope and thanksgiving is born of our loving our friends and our labor.” This is the perfect song for our collaboration with our young high school singers. The second melody dances with energy in 9/8: “we’re ready to work... by lending a hand....we bring in the harvest!” The two melodies work together in perfect harmony: “Give thanks...oh let us be joyful!” The song concludes with all hands and voices working together: “The promise of ending in right understanding is peace in our own hearts and peace with our neighbor!” What better message to end with tonight or at any time! A perfect finale of hope.