



Rebecca Scott, Director



Singing Is So Good A Thing!

**Saturday, December 3, 2022
Christ United Methodist Church Piscataway
7:30 PM**

**Grant funding has been provided by the
Middlesex County Board of County
Commissioners through a grant award from the
Middlesex County Cultural and Arts Trust Fund**



Saturday, December 3, 2022, at 7:30 pm

Christ United Methodist Church, Piscataway, New Jersey

CANTABILE CHAMBER CHORALE
Rebecca Scott, Artistic Director and Conductor

Lynne Stallworth, *piano*

Maria Valla Ramsay, *violin*; Sara D'Sa, *violin*

Jordan Fusco, *viola*; Alex Nelson, *cello*

PROGRAM

MELODY.....Myroslav Skoryk

Maria Valla Ramsay, violin

The Carman's Whistle..... William Byrd

(Theme and Variations 1,2,3)

String Quartet

Sing Joyfully..... William Byrd

FREEDOM: To be free and Sky Bound: In Memoriam Rosa Parks

(Cantabile premiere)Augusta Read Thomas

Ruth Anderman, Michelle Davenport: soprano soloists

The Carman's Whistle (Variations 4 & 5) William Byrd

Lynne Stallworth, piano

Sing Gently.....Eric Whitacre

Wiegenlied Op.49, No.4 (Lullabye).....Johannes Brahms

String Quartet

Lullabye (Goodnight, My Angel).....Billy Joel, arr: Philip Lawson

Sing to Me.....Andrea Ramsey

The Carman's Whistle (Variations 6 & 7)William
Byrd

String Quartet

Since Singing Is So Good A ThingJ. David Moore

Music in My Mother's House.....Stuart Stotts

arr: J. David Moore

All the way home.....Sarah Quartel

The Carman's Whistle (Variation 8).....William Byrd

Chorus, Piano, String Quartet

REBECCA RUTH SCOTT, Founding Artistic Director of Cantabile, was born in New Brighton, Pennsylvania, surrounded by music, art, and poetry. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano and Vocal and Choral Education from the Eastman School of Music, and a Master of Science in Choral Conducting from The Juilliard School. Now in her 35th season as artistic director of Cantabile, Ms. Scott has conducted over 35 premieres of new choral works with Cantabile. Her commitment to fostering and promoting new music garnered the Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming for Cantabile. She is faculty emeritus at The Juilliard School where she taught for 53 years.

LYNNE STALLWORTH, piano, grew up in Westerly, Rhode Island, where she began playing the piano at the age of five. Although encouraged to pursue piano performance as a profession, Mrs. Stallworth chose to expand her knowledge and experience in other areas in college, including studying jazz piano at New England Conservatory of Music. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy, a Master of Public Administration from Rutgers University, and a Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Simmons College. Mrs. Stallworth is Director of Music Ministry at Christ United Methodist Church Piscataway and is in her 12th year accompanying Cantabile Chamber Chorale.

FREEDOM: To Be Free and Sky Bound by composer **AUGUSTA READ THOMAS** is a piece in memory of Rosa Parks that uses texts from Parks' "Freedom" and Jalāl ad-Dīn Mohammad Rūmī's "Love." The piece inspires and motivates action to fight for freedom, human rights, and civil rights for all fellow human beings. Cantabile co-commissioned this work to honor the memory of our Cantabile alto friend, Marilyn Wilt. Augusta Read Thomas is a former chairperson of the American Music Center, she serves on many boards and, according to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, "has become one of the most recognizable and widely loved figures in American Music." Her complete bio and library of compositions can be perused at <https://augustareadthomas.com/>

MARIA RAMSAY is the violinist for and founder of "Simply Strings," a music business that provides live string entertainment from a vast repertoire for concerts, weddings, and events. In addition to freelance performing, she teaches orchestra in the Bridgewater-Raritan school district. She lives in Branchburg with her husband and four children.

SARA D'SA, an active freelance violinist, performs regularly with the Baroque Orchestra of NJ, Adelphi Orchestra, and the Livingston Symphony. She resides in Long Hill Township with her husband and two sons and enjoys reading, writing, and hiking.

Violist **JORDAN FUSCO** is an active performer, freelancer, and teacher in the North Jersey and NYC area. She performs in a wide array of genres from orchestral to musical theater to pop. She holds degrees from Montclair State University Mannes College. Recent engagements include performances with the New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra as well as the newly formed Montclair Orchestra.

Cellist **ALEX NELSON** is an active musician and teacher. He regularly performs as a member of Simply Strings and serves as an orchestra teacher for the East Brunswick School District.

CANTABILE CHAMBER CHORALE
Rebecca Scott, Artistic Director and Conductor
Lynne Stallworth, piano

Soprano I

Ruth Anderman
Michelle Davenport
Kaitlin Dunn
Judith Johnston
Katherine Lainhart
Elizabeth Whitehead

Tenor I

Larry Cohen
Jerry Phillips

Soprano II

Mitzi Lasky
Yeung-gyo Shin
Gail Tilsner

Tenor II

Ray Nolan
Gerry Spelrem

Alto I

Poldi Binder
Nancy Engel
Elizabeth Verderosa
Lynne Motto*

Bass I

Jaime Ross
William Whitehead
Ali Ekrem Yesilkanal

Alto II

Mary Donne
Anita Gould
Eileen Silverstein

Bass II

Bruce Bush
Matt Goldfogel
Dan Sillitti*
Rick Snyder

*Not singing in this concert

Since Singing is So Good a Thing!

Saturday, December 3, 2022

Program Notes by Rebecca Scott

Welcome! We are so glad that you have come to hear us sing tonight.

Although the pandemic is still affecting our lives, we are all getting out to see, hear, talk, walk, sing, and whistle with each other. So tonight, we want to express our joy and gratitude for being able to sing together and share our songs with you.

We begin our concert with *The Carman's Whistle*, which is a popular tune from the Tudor era. During the 16th century, a "carman" was what we would call a carter, a man with various sorts of horses and carriages for hire. The Worshipful Company of Car Men were known for their habit of whistling, which helped them manage their horses: "The Carman's Whistle" is reputed to be one of their favorite melodies. The Renaissance English composer William Byrd (1543-1623) wrote a set of variations on the theme of the *Carman's Whistle*. It survives in a collection for the virginal, "My Ladye Nevells Booke," dated 1591 and which was one of his most popular works. Since he could not get the tune out of his mind, he composed several variations on it for keyboard and other instruments. By the time you hear this theme and all the variations, you will be able to whistle the tune with us in the finale!

Melody was composed by Miroslav Skoryk (1938-2020), a Ukrainian composer and teacher. It is his most popular work and has been widely performed internationally in concerts, including in response to the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. It is frequently described as a spiritual hymn of Ukraine and has been used in commemorations of the Great Famine and the Revolution of Dignity.

William Byrd's last and most famous anthem, *Sing Joyfully* (c.1580-1590) takes its text from Psalm 81, verses 1-4. This anthem is a wonderful example of Byrd's word painting ability, particularly the phrase "Blow the trumpet in the new moon." It is scored for six voice parts (two sopranos, two altos, one tenor, one bass) and although the text does not come from any of the five sections of the mass, it incorporates many of the imitative polyphony techniques used in the mass. Listen how the six voices interweave. Byrd's text is from the *Geneva Bible* which is the Bible brought to America by the Puritans which continued to be popular for at least 40 years after the appearance of the King James version in 1611.

Sing joyfully unto God our strength: sing loud unto the God of Jacob.

Take the song, and bring forth the timbrel, the pleasant harp and the viol.

Blow the trumpet in the new moon, even in the time appointed, and at our feast day.

For this is a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.

FREEDOM: To Be Free and Sky Bound - In Memoriam Rosa Parks is performed a cappella by our women voices. It is composed by Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964) with text for the solo sopranos written by African American civil rights activist Rosa Louise McCauley Parks, best known for her pivotal role in the Montgomery bus boycott during the civil rights movement, and whom the U.S. Congress honored as “the first lady of civil rights” and “the mother of the freedom movement.” Parks also received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. The text for the women’s choral parts comes from Jalāl ad’Dīn Mohammad Rūmī, a 13th century Persian poet, Hanafi faqih, Islamic scholar, Maturidi theologian, and Sufi mystic. Like other mystic and Sufi poets of Persian literature, Rumi’s poetry speaks of love which infuses the world. Composer Thomas said, “Music is akin to an infinite alphabet.” Weaving together two texts originally written in two different alphabets (about 800 years apart) *FREEDOM: To Be Free and Sky Bound* unfolds and develops an elegant, resonant, graceful dialogue between Park’s “Freedom” and Rumi’s “Love.” Textual and musical braids embody Thomas’ notion of “infinite alphabet.”

Cantabile co-commissioned *FREEDOM: To Be Free and Sky Bound* with several Chorus America member choruses as an honor and in memory of our alto, Marilyn R. Wilt (1945-2014). Cantabile was fortunate to have Marilyn sing in our midst for several years. She brought a deep experience in music to us, after singing with the Radcliffe Choral Society and working as a professional in arts management (including work with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Bernstein). Luckily, when Marilyn looked for a new musical home, Cantabile was here to welcome her. She fit right into the alto section and enriched our sound with her voice and her musical acuity, and our spirits with her humor and gallant attitude toward life. Marilyn gave much of herself and we wish to honor and remember our relationship with her with gratitude that she shared some of her gifted life in singing and friendship with us.

FREEDOM: To Be Free and Sky Bound (2022) Augusta Read Thomas (b. 1964) In Memoriam

Rosa Parks:

*I would like to be remembered as a person who wanted to be free....
so other people would be also free.*

Jalāl ad’Dīn Mohammad Rūmī:

*Only from the heart can you touch the sky.
Love calls—everywhere and always.
We’re sky bound*

Sing Gently was written in March 2020 by Grammy Award-winning composer and conductor Eric Whitacre (b.1970) in reaction to the COVID-19 crisis, to “give some small measure of comfort for those who need it, and that it might suggest a way of living with one another that is compassionate, gentle and kind.” It premiered online on July 19, 2020, performed by the 17,572 singers of Visual Choir 6, created by Whitacre. Music and lyrics are by Eric Whitacre. Cantabile sang this work as part of our return to in-person performing on December 4, 2021.

*May we sing together, always, may our voice be soft.
May our singing be music for others and may it keep others a loft.
Sing, sing gently, always. Sing, sing as one.
May we stand together, always, may our voice be strong.
May we hear the singing and may we always sing along.
Sing, sing gently, always. Sing, sing as one, as one.
Sing gently as one.*

According to Songfacts,® a chat on Billy Joel's "The Complete Hits Collection 1973-1997" says he wrote *Lullabye* as a piano piece and had the melody before he came up with the lyrics. He later wrote ***Lullabye (Goodnight My Angel)*** as a lullabye for his 7-year-old daughter in response to her question, "Where do we go when we die?" What he told her was, 'After you die, you go into other people's hearts and they take you with them through their lives, and then you pass that along to your children.' She seemed content with that answer. It was a scary question, but the answer made sense to her.

LULLABYE (GOODNIGHT MY ANGEL) lyrics by Billy Joel

*Goodnight my angel, time to close your eyes
And save these questions for another day.
I think I know what you've been asking me.
I think you know what I've been trying to say.
I promised I would never leave you
And you should always know
Wherever you may go, no matter where you are
I never will be far away.*

*Goodnight my angel, now it's time to sleep
And still so many things I want to say.
Remember all the songs you sang for me
When we went sailing on an emerald bay.
And like a boat out on the ocean
I'm rocking you to sleep.
The water's dark and deep, inside this ancient heart
You'll always be a part of me.*

*Goodnight my angel, now it's time to dream
And dream how wonderful your life will be.
Someday your child may cry, and if you sing this lullaby
Then in your heart there will always be a part of me.
Someday we'll all be gone
But lullabies go on and on
They never die, that's how you and I will be.*

Andrea Ramsey enjoys an international presence as a composer, conductor, scholar, and music educator. Before leaping into full time composing and guest conducting, Ramsey held positions at The Ohio State University and the University of Colorado, Boulder, respectively. An award-winning composer with approximately 100 works to date, she believes strongly in the creation of new music. A native of Arkansas, Ramsey has experienced in her own life the power of music to provide a sense of community, better understanding of our humanity and rich opportunities for self-discovery. The beautiful piece *Sing to Me* was commissioned in honor of the Charlotte Children's Choir's 25th anniversary. The uplifting text is by poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox, and it appears in her best-known work titled Poems of Passion. Andrea Ramsey charmingly sets the text with melodic interest in all parts. Ramsey's sensitive, skillful writing makes for tender moments that truly evoke the meaning of the text.

Text adapted from poem of same name by Ella Wheeler Wilcox

*Sing to me,
Sing to me something of sunlight and bloom.
Sing no more of sorrow and gloom.
Sing no more of the world's noise and strife.
Sing to the beauty and brightness of life.
Sing to me. Sing of the blossoms that open in spring,
How the sweet flowers blow
And the long lichens cling.
And though winter is round about me,
There are bright summers and springs yet to be.
Sing to me.*

William Byrd is credited with publishing the first great English songbook *Psalms, Sonnets and Songs* in 1588. His book began with a list: “Reasons briefly set down by the author to persuade everyone to learn to sing.” Kerry McCarthy wrote in the Oxford University Press blog in June 2013, “Byrd’s “reasons to sing” give us a glimpse into everyday musical life in the time of Shakespeare. They reflect some unexpected sides of the composer’s own personality.... This songbook was being sold to amateur audiences, but Byrd pulls no punches here. Not even one person in a thousand, he says, has a truly good singing voice – and he goes on to say that “in many, that excellent gift is lost, because they want (i.e., lack) art to express nature.” Byrd’s final couplet sums it up perfectly. “Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing.”

J. David Moore wrote the music for ***Since Singing is So Good a Thing***. He is a composer, arranger, conductor, teacher. His music has been called “endlessly inventive,” “glorious...haunting...breathtaking,” and “joyous...wild and elemental.” He publishes through his company Fresh Ayre Music.

SINCE SINGING IS SO GOOD A THING text by William Byrd

Reasons briefly set downe by th'auctor to persuade every one to learn to sing.

*1. It is a knowledge easily taught, and quickly learned,
where there is a good master, and an apt scholar.*

2. The exercise of singing is delightful to Nature, and good to preserve the health of Man.

3. It does strengthen all parts of the breast, and does open the pipes.

4. It is a singularly good remedy for stuttering and stammering in the speech.

5. It is the best means to procure perfect pronunciation, and to make a good Orator.

*6. It is the only way to know where Nature has bestowed the benefit of a good voice:
which gift is so rare, as there is not one among a thousand that has it:*

*[and, in many, that excellent gift is lost, because they want Art to express Nature.] – this line is
not used in the musical setting*

*7. There is not any Music of Instruments whatsoever, comparable to that which is made of the
voices of Men, where the voices are good, and the same well sorted and ordered.*

*8. The better the voice is, the meeter it is to honour and serve God therewith:
and the voice of man is chiefly to be employed to that end.*

Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum. (Praise the Lord with every breath.)

Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing.

American composer Stuart Stotts is an author, storyteller, and songwriter whose song *Music in My Mother's House* is his most popular composition. He is a favorite performer for schools and family events, integrating the arts as a powerful approach to teaching, helping students and teachers work more creatively and collaboratively, all while deepening the curriculum. Stotts has modestly stated, "I think that, assuming people continue to sing together, *Music in My Mother's House* will still be sung 100 years from now in certain limited situations. It may be altered, but I am quite certain no one will know or acknowledge at those times who wrote it." The arrangement we perform is by J. David Moore.

Music in My Mother's House text by Stuart Stotts

*Refrain: There was music in my mother's house, there was music all around.
There was music in my mother's house, and my heart's still full of the sound.*

*There were wind chimes in the window, bells inside the clock,
An organ in the corner, tunes in the music box,
We sang while we were cooking or working in the yard,
We sang although our lives were really hard.*

*Refrain: There was music in my mother's house, there was music all around.
There was music in my mother's house, and my heart's still full of the sound.*

*She taught us all piano, but my sister had the ear,
She could play the harmony to any tune she'd hear.
Now, I don't claim much talent, but I always loved to play,
And I guess I will until my dying day.*

*Those days come back so clearly although I'm far away,
She gave me the kind of gift I love to give away,
And when my mother died and she'd sung her last song,
We sat in the living room, singing all night long.*

*Singing la
Singing the front porch songs,
Singing the old torch songs,
Singing la
Singing the hymns to send her home.*

*Refrain: There was music in my mother's house, there was music all around.
There was music in my mother's house, and my heart's still full of the sound.*

With a text by the composer Sarah Quartel, *All the way home*, was originally inspired by members of the Radcliffe Ladies' Choir and their motto 'friendship through singing'. The lilting vocal lines are subtly underpinned by a delicate piano accompaniment.

All the Way Home Sarah Quartel

*Sing to me comfort, sing to me home,
Sing to me friendships I have known.
Sing me a place where I belong,
Joyful, with harmonies sing me
All the way home with a song in my heart.
Brighten my path and carry me on,
All the way home.*

*There's a beautiful pow'r in what we bring,
There's strength in the glorious song we sing.
Easing all troubles, calming all fears,
Joyful, with harmonies sing me
All the way home with a song in my heart.
Brighten my path and carry me on,
All the way home.*

*Evening brings a shining star,
Her ancient anthems from afar.
Silence below her song in the sky.
Joyful, with harmonies sing me
All the way home with a song in my heart.
Brighten my path and carry me on,
All the way home.*