

VOCES NOVAE

A CHORAL RENAISSANCE

Fan Favorites

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June 2, 2024

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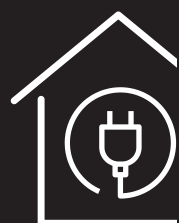
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VOCES NOVAE

A CHORAL RENAISSANCE

Fan Favorites

String Prelude

Isabella Christensen, violin
Betsy Osoffsky, violin
Melinda Odle, viola
Jonathan Ruckman, cello
Rob Whitmer, bass

Prelude to Peace

Z. Randall Stroope

Set Me as a Seal

René Clausen

Fly

Sara Groves, arr. Susan LaBarr

Elizabeth Weaver, solo

I Carry Your Heart with Me

David Dickau

Lux Aurumque

Eric Whitacre

Katie Kraft, soprano

How Lovely are Thy Dwellings

Johannes Brahms

Isabella Christensen, violin; Betsy Osoffsky, violin; Melinda Odle, viola;
Jonathan Ruckman, cello; Rob Whitmer, bass

Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

Alice Parker

Shabnam Mockon, soprano

Earth Song

Frank Ticheli

Flight Song

Kim André Arensen

Shenandoah

James Erb

Reunion Selections

Walk Together, Children

Moses Hogan

Rainsong

Houston Bright

The Dark Around Us, Come

Harry Pickens

Sandra Vaughn, Katie Kennedy, Corey Logsdon, Brian Shaw,
Katie Kraft, Shabnam Mockon, descants

Deep Peace

Elaine Hagenberg

Isabella Christensen, violin; Betsy Osoffsky, violin;
Melinda Odle, viola; Jonathan Ruckman, cello

Safety & Courtesy

If you need special assistance, please see an usher.

Please silence all electronic devices before the performance. This includes watches, cell phones, pagers, and texting devices.

Latecomers are asked to wait to be seated until an appropriate time during the performance.

The use of any recording devices is strictly prohibited.

In the unlikely event of an emergency please walk, not run, to the nearest exit.



All programs, activities, and services will be provided equally without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

Program Notes

Written by members of Voces Novae

Prelude to Peace

By Amy Shir

I auditioned for Voces Novae in the fall of 1997, having moved back to Louisville after college and working in other cities. Hanging around at my audition was my future husband! That year as our courtship progressed, we sang the gorgeous song "Prelude To Peace", based on the lyrics by American lyric poet Sara Teasdale (1884-1993). It became "our" song. In June 1998, I was surprised with a marriage proposal at our annual VN meeting, the day after our Spring concert. Everyone sang "Prelude to Peace." This piece really spoke to our hearts:

*When I think of you, I am at rest,
My thoughts seek you as waves that seek the shore,
Lover of beauty, knightliest and best;
When I think of you, I am at rest.*

Set Me as a Seal

By Anne Campbell

Over the past 30 years VN has performed many choral pieces written by Rene Clausen. The text "Set Me as a Seal" is one choral piece that has been sung often in churches, weddings and concert venues. It is the simple beauty of the music with the words affirming "...that Love is strong as death".

Coterie, a small group in which some were also VN members, were guests with VN in a few concerts and sang this on tour, and at a wedding and a funeral.

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Fly

By Sandra Vaughn

I started singing with VN in 2011, and this song brings me back in time to my earliest years with VN. I sang this twice since joining VN, under Frank Heller's direction. This is a piece I have a very hard time getting through without getting choked up. The moment where we sing "fly" for the first time - going from unison to the beautiful harmonies - gasp! Even though none of us can just flap a pair of wings and rise up into the sky, we can all relate to that feeling. "When you love me there's nothing I wouldn't try." There is tremendous power in how we treat others. It doesn't take much and we can make someone's day: "Oh, how the little things strengthen my tiny wings." I love the message. I love the harmonies. I love the feeling of nostalgia. "Fly" has always been one of my favorites. I am excited to sing this under Angela's direction as part of our season finale.

Fly

By Cynthia Christensen

I've only been with Voces Novae for the past six years, but this piece is one I've been blessed to have sung, once before, during these six years. I had forgotten all about it, but when we recently sang it in rehearsal, I recalled the same feelings I'd had the last time. This song brings a lump to my throat, every time we sing it. I have to struggle to hold back tears of emotion while I'm singing - big feelings of joy, of being loved and nurtured. Ever since childhood, I've not paid much attention to lyrics. For me, it's the melodies and the chords that make a song. But in this piece, the beautiful melody and harmonies have awakened me to the words, and it is this perfect combination that makes it difficult for me to get through the song without crying. Life can be overwhelming, wearing us down to where we forget the love we share, forget our life partners who are there to nurture and lift us up in our journey through life. The thought of a loved one whispering my name, pausing during a busy day to give an extra-long look, winking from across the room, a gentle touch to the arm - all these little gestures of love and encouragement, offered without even uttering a word, given freely - so that I can grow and take on any challenge in life. This song demonstrates that, despite all the distractions in our daily life, these small gestures can remind us that our love is still there, waiting for us to notice and to remember that we are there to help each other fly. This is what makes me cry.

I Carry Your Heart with Me

By Linda Harris

This is the song VN sang shortly after Wes and I realized we were in love. I was in the audience and he sang this for me. Except he was overcome by his emotions, and couldn't sing after a bit. So Jim Muscutt, as his best friend, looked at me and sang it for him. The two of them then told me this was Wes's love song to me. The lyrics to this are on a painting in our kitchen.

Lux Aurumque

By Lori Perkins

My first experience with Eric Whitacre was in high school when we learned Lux Aurumque for our state choir contest (coincidentally, I was singing for Angela Hampton then as well). The words are simple, yet the music is anything but. I was immediately enamored with the composer's intricate harmonies. This gorgeous piece has stuck with me for the past 22 years and, though I have since sung many of his other works, Lux is still my favorite of Whitacre's. In a full-circle moment, I was fortunate enough to sing this piece at the direction of Eric Whitacre himself during a concert in March 2024 and am now singing it with VN under the direction of the same person who introduced it to me in high school!



How Lovely are Thy Dwellings

By Kathy Van Ryzin

Brahms' "German Requiem" has held a special place in my heart since I first had the pleasure of performing it in college. It immediately became my favorite classical work and I have looked for any opportunity to sing it in subsequent years. As this piece has made appearances at various times in my life, I am excited to finally perform it with this group and especially in celebration of Voces Novae's 30th season! The movement "How Lovely Are Thy Dwellings" is well-loved for good reason. I hope it is as enjoyable to experience for the audience as it is for me, and my fellow singers, to bring to life. I could only be happier to sing it if we were doing it in German!

Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

By Danielle Revert

I have had the pleasure of singing this piece several times with VN, but the first time I ever sang it was with the KY Ambassadors of Music when I was in high school. We were lucky enough to be performing this piece in a historic church in Austria, and a couple who was sightseeing just happened to be in this church while we were performing. It was clear they were moved by the music, and they tried speaking to several of us after the performance. We all ended up just awkwardly smiling and shaking hands, since neither of us spoke a lick of the other's language. I think of the power of this piece every time I get to sing it; you can feel the joy even without the lyric. It has such a special way of breaking down barriers between people and translating the emotion of human experience to the listener. I think this is one of the most powerful attributes of choral music, and this song has it in spades!

Earth Song

By Christie Tompkins

The first time I sang Earth Song, I had no idea of the pivotal moment the piece would play in my life. When singing this piece, I've always loved the moment you can picture the sun break through on the lyrics "And music and singing shall be my light." That's what music has always been for me – a refuge, a place of light, until one day it wasn't. I was at a Creative Motion workshop with Frank Heller, and he played a recording of the piece during our closing event. As I stood in the room, enveloped in the song and surrounded by friends, I felt totally alone and started crying. It took me a while to really process it, but I realized that for the first time in my life, music and singing were not my refuge. I didn't feel anything and that was such a devastating feeling for me. When I was finally able to talk about it with Frank, I realized I needed to make some changes. This piece so eloquently put words to what I had been struggling with and didn't even realize. It took some time, but with my mentor and dear friend Frank, guiding me, I found the refuge and light again. Now when I sing the words, "But music and singing have been my refuge," I know just how much that means to me. So thank you to both Franks for helping me find what I had lost, or maybe just misplaced.

Earth Song

By Teresa Smith

My sister and best friend, Debbie Meadors, sang in VN from 1997–2007. After she passed in August 2007, VN dedicated a concert in her memory. "Earth Song" was performed there and became my anthem from Debbie. These inspiring lyrics feel like her words to me:

*But music and singing have been my refuge,
And music and singing have been my light.
A light of song shining strong. Alleluia!
Through darkness and pain and strife, I'll
Sing... Be... I'll Live... See... Peace. Peace.*

A beautiful message for all of us, my friends!

Flight Song

By Lisa Holm

Kim Arnesen and Euan Tait wrote Flight Song in 2015 as a gift to the St. Olaf choir. Tait used the idea of flight in his lyrics as a metaphor for the beginning of a young life.

Life has many beginnings, pauses, and endings. I began singing with Voces Novae in 2019. We had a wonderful fall concert and were preparing for our March, 2020, concert when COVID hit. Everything came crashing to a halt. There were no graduation ceremonies or birthday parties. There were no Easter or Christmas celebrations. Work stopped. School stopped. Church services stopped. Music stopped. Voces Novae stopped. It was heartbreaking. We paused. We waited.

Finally, in 2021, we began again. It was very different. We sat apart. We wore masks. But, we sang. We sang together!

In January, 2022, we presented our first post-COVID concert aptly called How Can I Keep from Singing. Flight Song was on the program. It moved me to tears to sing the words "for this is music's inner voice saying yes, we hear you. All you who cry aloud. And we will fly answering you: so our lives sing."

Our lives and our singing had paused for a time, but we were alive to "sing as love" once again.

In words and melody, Flight Song indeed describes life beginning. I believe Tait when he says, "All we are, we have found in song. Our flight begins as song."



Walk Together, Children

By Amy Shir

My mother, Lynn Goldstein, may she rest in peace, was a talented singer and music educator here in Louisville. I grew up singing in the AJ synagogue choir with her. We sang duets together at home. She always made everyone cry when she sang "Sunrise Sunset" at weddings. My mother loved Negro Spirituals. Every time Voces Novae sang spirituals, my mother, who attended all of my concerts until she passed in December 2016, would tell me they were her favorites. I, too, have a deep love for spirituals, especially those written by Moses Hogan (1957-2003). Hogan is considered the greatest arranger of spiritual music. His arrangements lift us up, remind us we are ONE, connect us to the God of our understanding, and give us hope. Plus, they are SUPER fun to sing!

*Oh, walk together children
Don't you get weary
Walk together children
Don't you get weary
Walk together children
Don't you get weary
There's a great camp meeting in the promised land*

Special note: this is also the last piece Frank Heller conducted with Voces Novae in the spring of 2019.

Rainsong

By Anne Campbell

During a recent rehearsal of "Rainsong" I remembered why I love it so much! The music and harmonies are hauntingly beautiful. The text, also written by Dr. Bright, describes the deep emotions one feels after a loved one has died. I literally get goosebumps with the soaring musical phrase "See how the rains do pour, as if forevermore."

The Dark Around Us, Come

By Shabnam Mockon

This song is quite special to me, and singing it is just pure joy. I've always believed that all on earth are members of one family, and the words of Wendell Berry in "The Dark Around Us Come," brought to life in music so fittingly by Harry Pickens, let us feel that to our very core. Voces Novae first sang this piece with Frank Heller as our director, and I feel his presence every time we sing it. "And all the earth shall sing!"



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Deep Peace

By Bill Byrne

Elaine Hagenberg's "Deep Peace" was added for our performance in London. It was my first year with Voces Novae and it took me somewhere I needed to be but wasn't aware of at first. The more we rehearsed and then performed it, I realized a deep peace was what I was missing. After a few years of losses, I realized a "Deep Peace" could help with my emptiness. I ask you to not only listen to the music but pay attention to the voice.

Deep Peace

By Kenney Snell

With so much violence in the world today, it is easy to forget the things that lift us up and give us peace of mind. Singing with Voces Novae lets me escape the world's problems.

Elaine Hagenberg's melodies and harmonies, paired with the strings' accompaniment, create a rich and glorious composition. Each of the voice parts sing the melody line at different times throughout the piece.

"Moon and stars pour their healing light to you" and "Christ, light of the world," the words of "Deep Peace" remind me: God watches over us.

When the choir sings "Stars to you," we crescendo our voices to a high point and then gradually start to come down to a gentle piano sound as we finish the piece.


I am honored to share this gift of peace alongside so many talented voices and musicians.



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We hope to see you at one of our concerts next season:

November 24, 2024

March 2, 2025

June 1, 2025

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