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## Program Notes Recital: Choral (MUAP 622 RC)

K. Angeline Bryner

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## **Program Notes**

K. Angeline Bryner

Recital: Choral (MUAP 622 RC)

May 3rd, 2024

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Music in  
Conducting

Messiah University

Mechanicsburg, PA

## George Frideric Handel

Georg Fredrich Handel was born in 1685 in Halle Germany. From an early age, he received an education in music theory, harpsichord, organ, violin, and oboe. When he was seventeen, he enrolled at Halle University and took on a position as the organist for the local Calvinist cathedral, Domkirche. Handel's growing interest in opera led him to study abroad in Italy between 1706 and 1710, during which time he composed several operas which varied in their reception and popularity.<sup>1</sup>

In 1710, Handel was offered a large salary to work for Georg Ludwig, the Elector of Hanover. Handel accepted under the stipulation that he could travel to London for a year, which he overstayed, and spent only a short time in Hanover before requesting another leave to work in London, this time permanently. Queen Anne of England died, and the Elector of Hanover became King George I, leaving Handel to settle in his preferred home in London. In 1727, he became an English citizen and had his name legally changed to George Frideric Handel.<sup>2</sup>

Handel primarily composed opera, particularly at the beginning of his career, although he also expanded to odes and oratorios due to their popularity. He is renowned for his rapid compositional process. While it is interesting that he could assemble masterpieces at any rate, Handel's quick compositional output can be credited to how he "borrowed" previously written music, sometimes from his own previously completed works, and sometimes from others, then reassembling them and publishing them in their new form.<sup>3</sup>

Handel began to lose his sight in 1751 and underwent several operations under the same surgeon who operated on J.S. Bach's eyes, but these operations were unsuccessful on both

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<sup>1</sup> Dennis Shrock, *Choral Repertoire*, Second edition, New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2023, 367

<sup>2</sup> Shrock, 368

<sup>3</sup> Shrock, 370

composers. This affected his compositional output, but he remained an active part of the music community for the next eight years. Handel died in 1759 and was buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey.<sup>4</sup>

Handel began the composition process of *Messiah*<sup>5</sup> on August 22nd, 1741, and completed the final orchestration on September 14th of the same year, a total of twenty-four days from start to finish. It premiered the following year in Dublin where it was extremely well received. However, despite the acceptance in Dublin, Handel did not advertise the title of the oratorio as *Messiah* before its premiere in London, but rather just *a new sacred oratorio*. This method could have been more effective. Most of the librettos written during the Baroque era were put together by contemporary authors about biblical characters, however, *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt*, and the *Occasional Oratorio* used text directly from scripture. This was uncommon for oratorios because at the time it was seen as improper to perform scripture outside of a religious setting. Because of this fact, *Messiah* was not initially popular and was only performed six times before its revival in 1750 when it was performed at a charity event at the chapel of the Foundling Hospital in London.<sup>6</sup>

The libretto was written by Charles Jenner and taken directly from bible verses. The pieces that will be performed in this recital are Movement 25, "And With His Stripes," which takes its lyrics from Isaiah 53:5, Movement 29 "Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart," using Psalm 69:20, and "Lift Up Your Heads" Psalm 24:7-10. Each of these sections is from the second portion of *Messiah* otherwise referred to as the "Easter" movement.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Shrock, 368

<sup>5</sup> George Frideric Handel, "Messiah," ed. Frideric Chrysander, Nicolas Sceaux, 2009

<sup>6</sup> Shrock, 73

<sup>7</sup> The Tabernacle Choir at Temple Square, "George Frideric Handel: Messiah Oratorio Libretto with Scripture Links," Thetabernaclechoir.org, 2024, March 25, 2024.

## J.S. Bach

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in 1685 in Germany during the early Baroque era of music history and is now considered one of the most influential composers of that period. Born into an already very musical family, Bach was exposed to music and influenced by it throughout his youth. He received lessons from his family and enrolled in formal lessons from prominent musical figures in his area. Due to his limited geographical presence, Bach was not famous or widely known until Felix Mendelssohn unearthed his music again in the 19th century. Bach primarily composed chamber and piano music but is also revered for his sacred choral works such as his B Minor Mass, St John's Passion, St. Matthew's Passion, the Christmas Oratorio, and his only Magnificat. Bach was held in high esteem by his employers and those he associated with.<sup>8</sup> Bach died in 1750 and it is generally understood that his death marked the end of the Baroque period.

"Bist du bei mir"<sup>9</sup> is originally from the opera *Diamedes* by Gotfried Heinrich Stölzel (1690-1749) and was copied by several members of Bach's family. Bach's family held Stölzel's music in high esteem. While he was in Leipzig, Bach used some of Stölzel's pieces for church services. The text from this piece translates to

If you are with me, then I will go gladly  
Unto my death and to my rest.  
Ah, how pleasing were my end  
If your beautiful hands then  
Shut my faithful eyes!

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<https://www.thetabernaclechoir.org/messiah/libretto-with-scripture-links.html?lang=eng>

<sup>8</sup> Christoph Wolff, and Walter Emery, "Bach, Johann Sebastian," Oxfordmusiconline.Com, Oxford Music Online, January 20, 2001.  
<https://doi.org/https://doi-org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article6002278195>.

<sup>9</sup> J.S. Bach, Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel. "*Bist du bei mir*," *Mir*Cimarron Music Press, 2008.

The Orchestra of St. Luke's blog reminds us that although this may seem like a dark text for a love song, death was a very prominent part of life during the eighteenth century, and music was a tool that people often embraced to express their feelings on the subject.<sup>10</sup> The piece was originally composed for a soloist but is frequently sung by unison choirs. While it is simple enough for young people to sing, it is also an excellent piece to teach fundamental concepts of musicianship such as phrasing, navigating minor melismas, and diction.

### **Ruth Schram**

Ruth began piano and theory lessons at the age of five and began composing when she was twelve, publishing her first piece twenty years later. She studied music at Lancaster Bible College and Millersville State College and taught Elementary Music in Pennsylvania for several years. She now lives in Birmingham, Alabama with her husband, Scott Schram, and they have two grown daughters, Crystie and Celsie. In addition to her choral music for church and school choirs, her songs appear on thirty albums (four of which have been Dove Award Finalists) and numerous children's videos, including sixteen songs on four gold videos, and four songs on one multi-platinum video. Her songs have also appeared on such diverse television shows as "The 700 Club" and HBO's acclaimed series "The Sopranos."<sup>11</sup>

"Scarborough Fair"<sup>12</sup> is a traditional English folk song that is connected to the Scottish ballad, "The Elfin Knight," which has been traced back as far as 1650. The ballad was revived

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<sup>10</sup> Orchestra of St. Luke's. "'Bist Du Bei Mir,' an Iconic Love Song." Oslmusic.Org. Orchestra of St. Luke's, Accessed March 25, 2024. [https://oslmusic.org/bach\\_posts/bist-du-bei-mir-an-iconic-love-song/](https://oslmusic.org/bach_posts/bist-du-bei-mir-an-iconic-love-song/).

<sup>11</sup> Ruth E. Schram, "The Music of Ruth Elaine Schram," Chormusic.Com, Accessed March 1, <https://chormusic.com/bio.htm> 2024.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Elaine Schram, "Scarborough Fair," U.S.A. Choristers Guild 2022.

and given new life by Simon & Garfunkel.<sup>13</sup> Schram's strophic arrangement of the piece is an excellent addition to a program for a secondary choral ensemble because of the harmonic variations, singable nature, and changing tempos.

### **Andrea Ramsey**

Andrea Ramsey (b1977) is an American composer from Arkansas who received her Bachelor of Music Education from Arkansas Tech University, Master of Music from the University of Kansas, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in music education from Michigan State University.<sup>14</sup> Ramsey enjoys an international presence and is a frequent guest conductor at many schools and conferences. Due to her background in music education, Ramsey frequently presents or performs at national conferences such as the American Choral Director's Association, and National Association for Music Educators. Most recently, she served as a principal conductor for the Pacific International Young Women's Choral Festival in Eugene, Oregon, and conducted the National ACDA Junior High/Middle School Honor Choir in 2023. She writes for and works with a wide range of voices, from young adolescents up through collegiate voices. Before becoming a full-time composer, Andrea held positions in music education at Ohio State University and the University of Colorado, respectively.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Norm Cohen, "Child Ballad," Grove Music Online, 16 Oct. 2013; Accessed 4 May, 2024. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy.messiah.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-1002248876>.

<sup>14</sup> "Dr. Andrea L. Ramsey," Atualumni.Com, Arkansas Tech University, Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://www.atualumni.com/s/978/bp18/interior-full.aspx?sid=978&gid=1&calcid=634&calpgid=1865&pgid=252&ecid=6343&crd=0#:~:text=Ramsey%20holds%20a%20Dotor%20o%20f,she%20graduated%20from%20Arkansas%20Tech>.

<sup>15</sup> Andrea Ramsey, "Full Biography," Www.Andreamsey.Com, Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://www.andreamsey.com/about>.

“There Has to Be A Song”<sup>16</sup> is a spiritual piece with lyrics written by Bob Bensen and is arranged to sound like a traditional gospel piece with improvisatory piano accompaniment and soulfully articulated phrases. This piece directly incorporates staccato and legato articulation, making it easy to introduce those concepts to young musicians, as well as exciting for them to sing and play with their voices. While this piece does have religious undertones, the text is still appropriate for any public school setting. Phrases from the text speak to and resonate with the students who have experienced hardship and used music as an outlet for self-expression and to find happiness in their lives.

### **Victor C. Johnson**

Born in 1978, Victor C. Johnson is a contemporary composer and native of Dallas, Texas. Victor attended the University of Texas at Arlington where he majored in music education with a concentration in organ. Johnson is currently the School Choral Editor for Chorister’s Guild and was previously a classroom music teacher at the Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts for eighteen years. During an interview with Worship Songs Online, Johnson gave this quote regarding his composition style. “My youth was spent in a wonderfully inspiring church with fantastic music programs. Along with a strong spiritual and theological foundation, I received a strong musical foundation as well. I view my compositional style to be very traditional, with a little “seasoning.” I love the rich history and theology that can be found in hymn texts, and I enjoy setting those hymns, either as arrangements or in new, original settings. But, I like to add a little color and

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<sup>16</sup> Andrea Ramsey, “There Has to Be A Song,” U.S.A. Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc. 2010



texture to those arrangements by using contemporary and fun chordal progressions and harmonies.”<sup>17</sup>

Johnson’s setting of the African-American spiritual is based on the New Testament parable about the ten virgins told in Matthew 25:7 and 12:35-36. The parable calls to the story of Harriet Tubman. The slaves never knew when they needed to be ready to leave if they were to escape their imprisonment via the underground railroad. “Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, the time is drawing nigh!” would surely call to that time in history. Johnson’s arrangement of “Keep Your Lamps” is dramatic through dynamics, key changes, and accented articulation. It is also rhythmically intense and interesting. Together, those compositional devices match the urgency and quickness of the given text.<sup>18</sup>

## **Mark Hayes**

Mark Hayes was born in 1953 and raised in a creative musical environment, beginning piano lessons at age ten and developing his improvisational skills at an early age. He earned a B.M. in piano performance, magna cum laude, from Baylor University. During his time in university, his dream of becoming a composer and arranger was born and nurtured. He started playing piano for the congregation he attended when he was thirteen and his compositional output is largely based on Christian and gospel music. As a child, he was not exposed to very much contemporary or popular music, but took more of an interest in Broadway music, orchestral works, and would rather listen to NPR than The Beatles.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Martin, "Composer of the Month: Victor Johnson." *Worshipsonline.Com*. Worship Songs Online, March 24, 2020. <https://worshipsonline.com/2020/03/24/victor-johnson/>.

<sup>18</sup> Victor C. Johnson, “Keep Your Lamps,” *The United States: Heritage Music Press* 2007.

<sup>19</sup> "Interview with Mark Hayes." *Linus7243*. September 15, 2010. Video,

“Battle of Jericho”<sup>20</sup> is a traditional spiritual inspired by the story of Joshua in the Old Testament, Joshua 6:1-27. Hayes arranged this piece for SATB and piano. The piano accompaniment is difficult and interesting, providing fun support to the singers who have to navigate key changes and tempo changes along with the different diction and pronunciation issues they tackle in this awe-inspiring piece.

### **Roger Emerson**

Roger Emerson was born in 1950 in Downey California. He was exposed to music at an early age as his mother was an arranger for live radio for several decades. Aside from his mother, Emerson’s two main mentors were George Mattos and Kirby Shaw. Emerson graduated from Southern Oregon University with a degree in Music Education and taught in Mt. Shasta, California, for twelve years. During his teaching career, he experimented with his compositional skills with his choirs. After seven years of teaching, Emerson resigned and pursued a career in full-time music writing. Emerson’s two main mentors were George Mattos and Kirby Shaw. Roger resides in Mt. Shasta, California with his wife Mari, daughter Kayla, and son Ryder.<sup>21</sup>

“It Don’t Mean a Thing”<sup>22</sup> takes a Duke Ellington jazz classic and makes it accessible to young singers, giving them a fun introduction to the style. “Irving Mills then wrote the lyrics and the first recording, featuring Ivie Anderson, was released February 2, 1932. This recording was added to the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2008. Ellington attributed the phrase “It don’t mean a

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1sSgY1oeTkA>.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Hayes, “Battle of Jericho,” U.S.A. Alfred Publishing Co., Inc, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Emerson, Roger. "Artist Bio." Rogeremerson.Com. Accessed March 19, 2024.  
<https://www.rogeremerson.com/artist-bio>.

<sup>22</sup> Roger Emerson, “It Don’t Mean a Thing (If It Ain’t Got That Swing)” U.S.A Hal Leonard Corporation, 2004

thing if it ain't got that swing" to trumpeter Bubber Miley; Cootie Williams (Miley's replacement) said it was his catch phrase; Mills said he originated the phrase when explaining to Ellington why customers weren't dancing. Others may have been using the term at the time as well."<sup>23</sup> In other words, music means nothing if it doesn't make the listener feel something.

### **Aaron Copland**

Aaron Copland, nicknamed the "Dean of American Music," was born in 1900 in Brooklyn, NY. His parents were both Jewish Immigrants from Russia. Some of his most significant works are "Appalachian Spring," and "Fanfare for the Common Man," for orchestra, as well as "The Second Hurricane," and "Twelve Poems of Emily Dickenson," for voice.<sup>24</sup> His musical upbringing began with private lessons, and he was inspired by innovative musicians such as Claude Debussy, Maurice Ravel, and Alexander Scriabin. Between 1921 and 1924, Copland pursued European training under the tutelage of Nadia Boulanger, who heavily influenced his compositional career and encouraged his study of classical music, which he was previously less enamored with. "One of his country's most enduringly successful composers, Copland created a distinctively American style in works of varying difficulty for a diversity of genres and mediums, including ballet, opera, and film. Also active as a critic, mentor, advocate,

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<sup>23</sup> "Stories of Standards: "It Don'T Mean a Thing" – Duke Ellington," Kuvo.Org, Kuvo Jazz, Accessed April 19, 2024. <https://www.kuvo.org/stories-of-standards-it-dont-mean-a-thing-duke-ellington/#:~:text=Ellington%20attributed%20the%20phrase%20%E2%80%9CIt,why%20customers%20weren't%20dancing.>

<sup>24</sup> "Aaron Copland, 1900-1990." Loc.Gov. Library of Congress, Accessed March 19, 2024. [https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200182578/.](https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200182578/)

and concert organizer, he played a decisive role in the growth of serious music in the Americas in the 20th century.”<sup>25</sup>

The New Mexico Philharmonic performed a selection of Aaron Copland’s *Old American Folk Songs* and says this in their program notes: “I Bought Me a Cat”<sup>26</sup> is a whimsical children’s song in the style of “Old MacDonald,” with a verse repeating and adding a new animal with each iteration (the last “animal” being a wife!). The song affords the soloist the opportunity to impersonate the various animals and the accompaniment simulates barnyard sounds of the cat, duck, goose, hen, pig, horse and cow.”<sup>27</sup> Another common change to the text is if a female soloist is performing the piece, she will substitute the word “wife” for the word “man.”

### **Kenneth Riggs**

“Kenneth Riggs (b. 1969) has been composing choral music for over 25 years. His works have been performed and recorded by choirs throughout the U.S.A. as well as internationally. As a choral music educator, he has taught in public schools at all grade levels, as well as teaching private voice and piano. He has been the choir director at Tahoma High School in Maple Valley, WA since 1996, and is also the Music Director at Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church. Riggs serves as Music Coordinator for the Tahoma School District. He holds both his B.M. in Music Education and his M.M. in Choral Conducting from Central Washington University where

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<sup>25</sup> Howard Pollack, "Aaron Copland, 1900-1990," [Www.Oxfordmusiconline.Com](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com), Grove Music Online, October 16, 2013. <https://doi.org/https://doi-org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.articleA2249091>.

<sup>26</sup> Aaron Copland, “I Bought Me a Cat” U.S.A. Boosey and Hawkes, 1950.

<sup>27</sup> New Mexico Philharmonic. “Program Notes: Aaron Copland, Selections from Old American Songs (1950-1952). [nmphil.org](http://nmphil.org). (n.d.) March 25, 2024. <https://nmphil.org/concerts/repertoire/copland-old-american-songs/>

he also studied composition. He is a member of ACDA and NAFME, and is active as both a clinician and a performer.”<sup>28</sup>

This piece was a passion project for Riggs and was composed in 2013 and published in 2016 for SAB, and in 2018 for SATB. As Rigg was introduced to the poem that was used for this setting, he latched onto the concept of comparing the passing of time with the flowing of water, the idea that is evident in the different phrasing in this composition.<sup>29</sup> Words for “The Old Mill”<sup>30</sup> were written by Thomas Dunn English (1819-1902)<sup>31</sup>. The poem portrays a scene of the narrator when he visits an old mill, evoking nostalgic memories of his youth. The mill in this poem symbolizes the passage of time and the enduring nature of human labor.<sup>32</sup> This piece is an excellent way to teach the skill of matching tone, finding a solid connection to the rhythm and contrasting triplets in the 6/8 time signature with the duplets in certain phrases, and the communication and connection between the conductor and choir, and the choir and audience.<sup>33</sup>

### **Bob Chilcott**

Bob Chilcott (b1955) is a British composer from Plymouth in the United Kingdom. Chilcott has enjoyed a long life of choral singing, particularly in the King’s College, Cambridge, and The King’s Singers. He has a substantial catalog of works published by Oxford University

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<sup>28</sup> Riggs, Kenneth. "Biography." [Www.Kennethriggs.Com](http://www.kennethriggs.com). Kenneth Riggs, Composer, Accessed March 25, 2024. <http://www.kennethriggs.com/biography.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew Van Dyke, "*The Old Mill - Kenneth Riggs*." Podcasts.Apple.Com, Choral Catalogue, August 12, 2021. <https://podcasts.apple.com/ee/podcast/the-old-mill-kenneth-riggs/id1575140543?i=1000530767093>.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth Riggs, “The Old Mill,” U.S.A. Choristers Guild, 2016

<sup>31</sup> Donkey, John. "English, Thomas Dunn (1819-1902)." Pfaffs.Web.Lehigh.Edu. Lehigh University, accessed April 21st, 2024.. <https://pfaffs.web.lehigh.edu/node/54222>.

<sup>32</sup> "The Old Mill." [Www.Allpoetry.Com](http://www.Allpoetry.Com). All Poetry, <https://allpoetry.com/Songs:-The-Old-Mill>.

<sup>33</sup> Van Dyke

Press which reflects his wide taste in musical styles and his commitment to writing music that is accessible, singable, and communicative.<sup>34</sup> While Chilcott's musical style and taste vary, his most celebrated works are his arrangement of St John's Passion and Requiem to A Little Jazz Mass, and his Christmas Oratorio and Shepherd's Carol. As well as being a full-time composer, Chilcott is also a highly acclaimed choral conductor. He has been privileged to conduct many choirs all over the world. He is the Principal Guest Conductor of The BBC Singers, and in 2019 he was appointed Principal Conductor of Birmingham University Singers.<sup>35</sup>

"Can You Hear Me"<sup>36</sup> was written as a response to an experience Chilcott had when he was working as a singer with deaf children. He saw how enabling sign language was to his young singers and how aware, emotional, and connected they were with each other through the use of those tools. The song for Chilcott was an expression of strength and positivity.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the way the text is phrased makes it also able to resonate with abled audiences and their desire as humans to connect. This song has been particularly meaningful for my ensemble as several of their peers have family members in the deaf community.

## **Jacob Narverud**

Jacob "Jake" Narverud (b1986) is an American composer, arranger, lyricist, conductor, and pianist. Jake grew up singing as a cantor and choir member in the catholic congregation that

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<sup>34</sup> "Bob Chilcott Biography." [Www.Bobchilcott.Com](http://www.Bobchilcott.Com). Accessed March 18, 2024. <https://bobchilcott.com/bio.html>.

<sup>35</sup> "Bob Chilcott." [Https://Global.Oup.Com](https://Global.Oup.Com). Oxford University Press, 2024. <https://global.oup.com/academic/category/arts-and-humanities/sheet-music/composers/cilcottb/?cc=us&lang=en&>.

<sup>36</sup> Bob Chilcott, "Can You Hear Me?" Oxford, UK, Oxford University Press 1998

<sup>37</sup> Oxford Academic (Oxford University Press) "Bob Chilcott: Can You Hear Me?" Youtube Video, May 9, 2019 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPCOKg3qWfc&t=11s>

he and his family attended as a child, as well as learned how to play the French horn and several other instruments. He pursued music in college and received his Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance from Emporia State University, and his Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees in conducting from the Conservatory of Music at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. Jake is currently a composer in residence of the Boston Gay Men's Chorus for 2024 and the editor for Santa Barbara Music Publishing. Narverud's portfolio primarily consists of choral compositions and arrangements and several pieces for concert bands. Many of his pieces are accompanied by piano and other solo instruments.<sup>38</sup>

The text for "Jambo" was written by the arrangement's original composer, Teddy Kalanda Harrison. It is meant to be an inviting song that welcomes people and helps foster a community-based environment. The phrase that repeats over and over throughout the piece is "Hakuna matata!" which emphasizes the desire to make the listener feel relaxed and give the impression that they are among friends. Teddy originally performed this piece with his band, Them Mushrooms which primarily performed Chakacha, Reggae, and Benga. The percussion component of this piece adds a beautiful rhythm that makes Narverud's arrangement feel authentic and lively.<sup>39</sup>

### **Craig Carnahan**

Craig Carnahan (b1951) is an American Composer from the northern United States. Carnahan received his B.A. from Concordia College (Moorhead, MN) and completed his

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<sup>38</sup> Jacob Narverud, "Narverud Biography," Jnarverud.Com, January 29, 2024. [https://www.jnarverud.com/\\_files/ugd/c85911\\_5f94c3639bed4ef6a549627b9d8a70ee.pdf?index=true](https://www.jnarverud.com/_files/ugd/c85911_5f94c3639bed4ef6a549627b9d8a70ee.pdf?index=true)

<sup>39</sup> Jacob Narverud, "Jambo," The United States, Santa Barbara Music Publishing Inc.2013

graduate studies in composition with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota.<sup>40</sup>

Carnahan's composition style is strongly influenced by text, and all of his music and elements of his compositional process begin and end with the text. He is heavily influenced by Benjamin Britten's choral works, specifically the Five Flowers cycle and the War Requiem. The ideology of the 1960s pacifism played a role in his political views and musical upbringing.<sup>41</sup>

The text for "Dancing on the Edges of Time"<sup>42</sup> piece is written by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) and reads "Let your life lightly dance on the edges of time, like dew on the tip of a leaf." Rabindranath Tagore's poetry is not widely known in the Western world, although he was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize.<sup>43</sup> Mr. Carnahan says in his score that this poetry spoke to him. Perhaps Tagore's political ideals and works spoke out to Carnahan. The simple yet uplifting text by Tagore comes to life in the ascending motifs in this piece and allows the choir to explore the depth and meaning of the text through the music.

### **Josef Rheinberger**

Born in Liechtenstein in 1839, Rheinberger began his musical journey as an organist and was later pushed and persuaded by his mentor to pursue composition training. He primarily lived in Munich as an adult, married one of his former students, and had an otherwise peaceful life.

However, he suffered from poor health in his adult life, which sometimes left him melancholy.

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<sup>40</sup> "Craig Carnahan, Composer News." ECS Publishing Group. ECS Publishing Group, Accessed March 19, 2024. <https://www.ecspublishing.com/composers/c/craig-carnahan.html>.

<sup>41</sup> "An Inspiring Moment in Craig Carnahan's Life." Choral Arts Ensemble. May 9, 2018. Video, <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10155355169630143>.

<sup>42</sup> Craig Carnahan, "Dancing on the Edges of Time," Galaxy Music Corporation, 2016

<sup>43</sup> Nobel Lectures, *Literature 1901-1967*. Edited by Horst Frenz. 1969. Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Company. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1913/tagore/biographical/>.



This German composer was a master of classical methods and compositional devices and was heavily influenced by Bach and Mozart, as well as some of Beethoven's works. He had a love of sacred music and although he never spoke outright against the New German School, he did not utilize its then *au ven garde* techniques. Anton Würz says in his article about Rheinberger that "The strength of his works, in every sphere, lies in the indisputable mastery and the planned coherence of his compositional style, which is imbued with the spirit of polyphonic thinking rather than compelling inventiveness or vivid conception"<sup>44</sup>

"Abendlied" is set to the scripture Luke 24:29 and invites the listener to rest. The direct translation from Rheinberger's original German text is:

*Bide with us, for evening shadows darken,  
and the day will soon be over.*<sup>45</sup>

This SSATTB piece is a quintessential choral piece with its traditional form and sacred material that employs imitative polyphony and voice leading. These styles are similar to those of the Renaissance and early Baroque periods, which significantly inspired Rheinberger's compositional style.

### **Mary Lynn Lightfoot**

Mary Lynn Lightfoot was born in Canton, Missouri in 1952. Lightfoot was enrolled in piano lessons as a child and accompanied in church and school choirs throughout high school, rarely singing in an ensemble until university. As a fresh college graduate from Trueman State

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<sup>44</sup> Würz, Anton, and Siegfried Gmeinwieser. "Rheinberger, Josef (Gabriel)." Rogeremerson.Com. Grove Music Online, January 20, 2001. <https://doi.org/https://doi-org.ezproxy.messiah.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article23317>.

<sup>45</sup>"Abendlied, Op. 69, No. 3 (Josef Rheinberger)." Cpdl.Org. Choral Wiki, February 2, 2024. [https://www.cpdل.org/wiki/index.php/Abendlied,\\_Op.\\_69,\\_No.\\_3\\_\(Josef\\_Rheinberger\)](https://www.cpdل.org/wiki/index.php/Abendlied,_Op._69,_No._3_(Josef_Rheinberger))

University (formerly Northeast Missouri State University) like her mother before her, Lightfoot taught Junior high.<sup>46</sup> In her ensembles, she noticed that much of the music that was available at the time was not exciting or vocally and intellectually accessible for her young pupils, so she began composing her own to support the love of singing and help the students in her ensembles be motivated and interested in performing choral music. Lightfoot currently has over two hundred sixty published works, was employed as the executive editor of Heritage Music Press for twenty-five years, and is currently the Founding Editor of the educational choral line for Choristers Guild: Sing! Distinctive Choral Music for Classroom, Concert and Festival.<sup>47</sup>

“Eja, Eja”<sup>48</sup> is a fun piece that achieves Lightfoot’s goal of making choral music accessible for young voices. It is described as a “Captivating syncopations and rhythmic vitality spark this dynamic work that celebrates the power and joys of music. An exuberant piece based on the Latin word "Eja" (joy), this inspiring selection in a minor mode is a vivid call to listen and appreciate anew the "music" that surrounds us in our everyday lives. A terrific choice for general concert programming, festivals or "Music in Our Schools" month.”<sup>49</sup> This piece is of high educational value as it has a variety of dynamic changes and mood changes throughout the piece, along with syncopated rhythms and

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<sup>46</sup> "Mary Lynn Lightfoot." Choristersguild.Org. Choristers Guild, March 19, 2023. <https://www.choristersguild.org/document//196/>.

<sup>47</sup> "Mary Lynn Lightfoot - The Inside Voice." Jwpepper1876. November 23, 2016. Video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rek7BnerYBM>.

<sup>48</sup> Mary Lynn Lightfoot, “Eja, Eja! (We Will Sing for Joy)” U.S.A. Choristers Guild 2001

<sup>49</sup> "Eja, Eja! (We Will Sing for Joy)," Wwww.Jwpepper.Com, J.W. Pepper, January 1, 2024. <https://www.jwpepper.com/Eja%2C-Eja%21/3278520.item>.

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