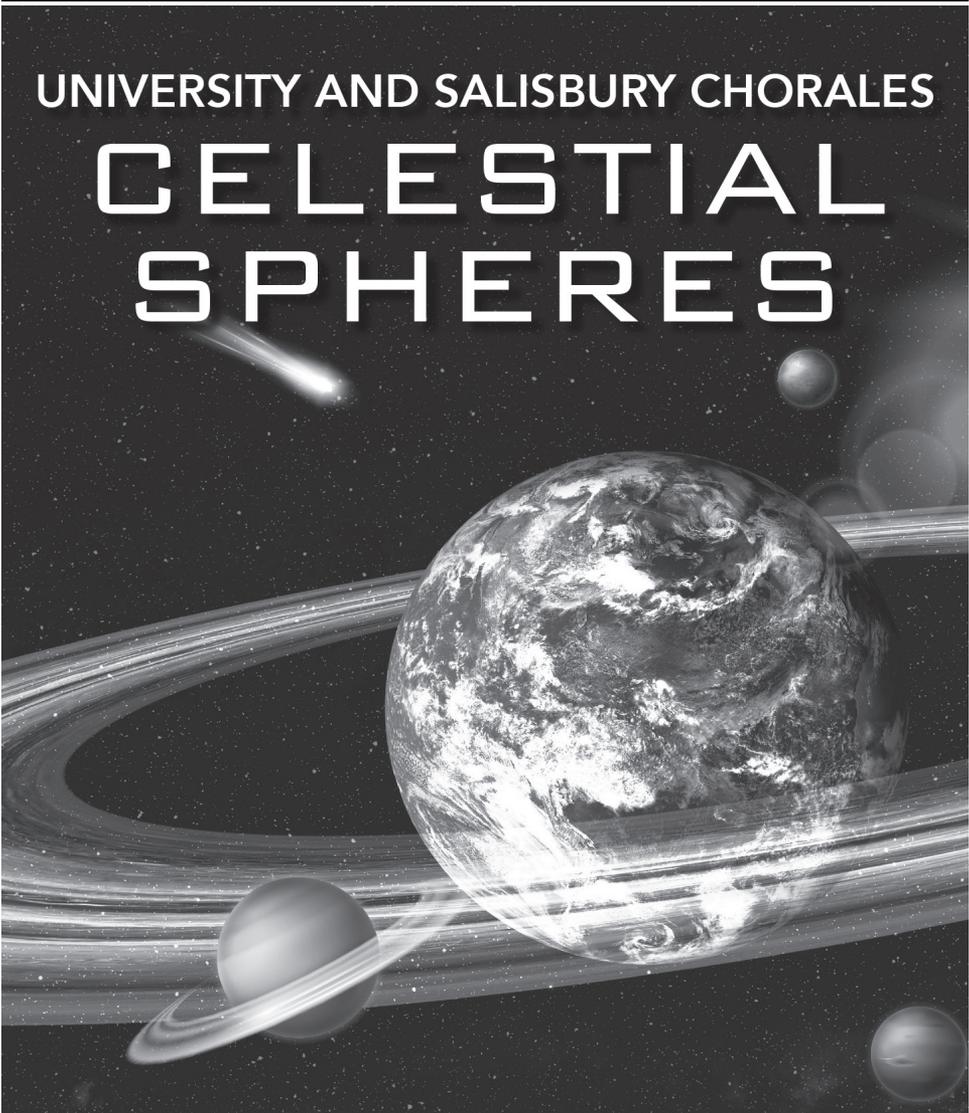


THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, THEATRE AND DANCE PRESENTS

UNIVERSITY AND SALISBURY CHORALES

CELESTIAL SPHERES



Dr. William M. Folger, Artistic Director and Conductor
Susan E. Zimmer, Pianist and Organist

Saturday, May 7, 2022
Holloway Hall Auditorium
7:30 p.m.

Salisbury
UNIVERSITY
www.salisbury.edu

PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY AND SALISBURY CHORALES

CELESTIAL SPHERES

Solstice words and music by John Purifoy
(b. 1952)

Stars..... by Ēriks Ešēnvalds
(b. 1977)

Eric Gehl, water-tuned glasses

Three Mysteries for Chorus..... by Thomas Pasatieri
(b. 1945)

I. When I Heard

II. Lucifer in Starlight

III. With How Sad Steps

Seek Him That Maketh The Seven Stars..... by Jonathan Dove
(b. 1959)

Susan E. Zimmer, organ

Spherical Madrigals..... by Ross Lee Finney

Prologue: "Love is a Circle"

(1906-1997)

I. When Again All These Rare Perfections Meet

III. His Body Was An Orb

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Galaxiasmusic and lyrics by Santiago Veros
(b. 1990)

Y la tiniebla del ocaso desvanece
cuando la luz de los ancestro
forma un manto que protégé y guía.

And the shadow of twilight fades
when the light of the ancestors
forms a mantle that protects and guides us.

Un ser iluminando las galaxias
La certeza en el camino del naufrago
El fulgor de la existencia, el tiempo y la distancia.

A being illuminating the galaxies
The certainty on the shipwrecked path
The glint of existence, time and distance

La aurora ancestral de luz dorada
en el despertar del alba.
los ojos radiantes de certezas
condensados en rayos luminosos.

The ancient aurora of golden light
at the awakening of the dawn
the eyes radiant with certainties
condensed into rays of light.

El eterno fulgor del alma:
un instante de infinitas distancias
y el amanecer de millones de albas.
condensados en rayos luminosos.

The eternal radiance of the soul:
an instant of infinite distances
and the birth of a million dawns.
condensed into rays of light.

El eterno fulgor del alma:
un instante de infinitas distancias
y el amanecer de millones de albas.

The eternal radiance of the soul:
an instant of infinite distances
and the birth of a million dawns.

Thou Whose Harmony Is the Music of the Sphereby Stephen Chatman
(b. 1950)

Susan E. Zimmer, flute

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PROGRAM

UNIVERSITY CHORALE PERSONNEL

Soprano I

Molly Fullerton
Sophia Merbaum
Miranda Rothermund

Soprano II

Aubrie Crehan
Rosalie Crosby
Trenelle Dashiell
Anne Hadley
Caroline Pekrul
Hannah Rash

Alto I

Stephanie Baires
Nya Epps
Camille Jones
Hannah Rash

Alto II

Rheya Ford
Kyra Stewart

Tenor I

John Allen
Trystan Rioux
Joe Shenton

Tenor II

Kyle Faverty
Marley Listmann

Bass I

Davion Childs
Michael Pittman
Dustin Radford
Riley Smith

Bass II

Kerin Jones

SALISBURY CHORALE PERSONNEL

Soprano I

Sophia Lundeen
Cheryl Helm Pierce
Sophie Smith

Soprano II

Susan Holt
Katherine Slaughter

Alto I

Heather Joslin
Daryl Newhouse
Joana Weaver

Alto II

Rebecca Chalmers
Katherine Harting
Patti Mannion
Shawn McEntee
Lacey Robinson

Tenor I

John Allen
Jeffery Miller

Tenor II

Christopher Griffin
Edgar Isaacs

Bass I

Richard Hunter
Dana Kacyon
Jared Sullivan
Colin Glushakow

Bass II

Scott Duncan
David Medland
Ben Reavis
Mark Williams
Bryce Young

SPECIAL THANKS

Dr. David Medland, Rehearsal Tracks
Dr. David Pollock, Salisbury Chorale Manager
Edgar Isaacs, Rehearsal Pianist
Dana Kacyon, Assistant Conductor

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During the title sequence of the 1966-1969 science fiction television series *Star Trek*, the iconic voice of Leonard Nimoy narrates “Space, the final frontier ... To boldly go where no man has gone before.”

Although it may be debatable that “space” is indeed the final or exclusive new frontier, the cosmos has always intrigued me. While researching the repertoire for this concert, I was reminded of the connection between planets and other cosmic phenomena and musical properties. The musical selections have either literal or literary connections to celestial spheres. The subject matter of the poetry deals directly with celestial objects, metaphorical circular or spherical shapes in the text, or musical ‘circles,’ – rounds or canons. The sounds of “space” textually painted by the harmonies, rhythms, melodies and accompaniments are prevalent in all the selections. Close harmonies and cluster chords create an ethereal aural image reinforced by intricate rhythmic figures in the piano and organ accompaniments, and the haunting tones of wine glasses, unaccompanied voices, and a solo flute obligato.

Planet earth, the sun and moon, the stars, and galaxies are the most recognizable celestial spheres. Just as the rising of the sun opens each day, so does our performance with *Solstice* by John Purifoy. The word “solstice” comes from the Latin roots, *sol* (sun) and *sistere* (to stand still). The music depicts the cycles of time and of life: “sun and earth,” “day and night,” “sphere on sphere,” and “dark and light.” In conjunction with the two equinoxes, the two solstices, occurring around June 21 and December 21, mark the four seasons of the year. A motivic unison octave, primarily in the treble voices, text paint a thin ray of sunlight at dawn and a reflected moonbeam at dusk: “solstice in our sense and sight, solstice, we return to light.”

Six water-tuned wine glasses accompany the voices in *Stars* by Latvian composer Ēriks Ešņvalds. This setting of Sara Teasdale’s poem reminds me of my youth, when in August my dad invited the family to the backyard late at night to gaze at the heavens to watch shooting stars. Ešņvalds’ music aptly text paints the “heaven full of stars over my head” and “Myriads with beating hearts of fire” with shimmering chord clusters created by the voices and water-tuned wine glasses.

Over 30 years ago, I was privileged to sing the premier of *Three Mysteries for Chorus* by Thomas Pasatieri, commissioned by the Ithaca College School of Music and performed by the Ithaca College Choir directed by Professor Lawrence Doebler. The first mystery is a setting of Walt Whitman’s poem “When I heard the learned astronomer” from the collection *Leaves of Grass*. The poet, perhaps Walt Whitman himself as narrator, explores the contrast between book knowledge and the importance of studying nature to acquire a deeper meaning. The wandering musical lines in the first part text paint the narrator’s boredom and daydreams during the lecture.

“In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time” focuses on the poet’s deeper sensitivity to nature and the wonderment of the stars beyond science. At this point, the music becomes more rhythmically exciting with ascending musical lines portraying eyes gazing upward to the heavens: “Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.” The final F

PROGRAM NOTES

Major tonality expresses the emotion of “at once full of peace and joy ...” according to Ernst Pauer, who in 1876, listed musical compositions fitting a particular affect.

Lucifer in Starlight, the second mystery, is from George Meredith’s sonnet “describing Lucifer’s power, past, and attempted ascent from Hell back into Heaven, and the sights seen along the way.” The rising treble vocal lines in the first section depict Lucifer’s attempted ascent, accompanied by the tenor and basses singing broken and plodding rhythmic figures creating an image of the drudgery of Satan’s quest to the heights. Ascending vocal lines continue in the men’s part accompanied by mystical chordal sonorities sung by the women. Once Lucifer reaches the middle height, he begins to sink back down, represented in the music by descending vocal lines. The codetta begins in unison and depicts the triumph of “the army of unalterable law,” ending in E Major with an affect of “full delight ... noisy shouts of joy” – but not for Lucifer!

Pasatieri chooses Sonnet 31 from Sir Philip Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* as the closing mystery, *With How Sad Steps*. The poem was inspired by Sidney’s unrequited love for Penelope Rich (nee Devereux) after he turned down the offer of marriage. When Penelope married Lord Robert Rich, the poet only then realized his love for her ... but alas she was gone. Like other poets, Sidney chooses the ‘wan’ or pale face of the moon, interpreting it as a sign of sorrow. The moon becomes a symbol of a solitary lover suffering from unrequited love. Slow, angular melodies in contrary motion with dissonant harmonies, and non-functional jazz-like chords, create the uneasiness and suffering of unrequited love. The eerie ascending lines in all vocal parts at the end represent the poet reaching for that unattainable moon – his love – “thou climb’st the skies.” The Eb Major cadence, ironically, can have the affect of love, of devotion, of an intimate conversation with God.”

Jonathan Dove’s setting of *Seek him that maketh the seven stars*, based on texts from the Prophet Amos 5:8 and Psalm 139, incorporates the timbres of the organ and voices in context of cluster chords juxtaposed with simple melodic figures. Melodic material in the first section is interrupted by a chorale ostinato, or mantra figure “Seek him, ah” The middle section is a fast waltz with jubilant arching antiphonal phrases passed between sopranos and tenors, and altos and basses. The mantra figure is slowed rhythmically, leading to the closing chorale-like section text painting “tuneth the shadow of death, into morning, Alleluia.”

The *Spherical Madrigals* take on a literary focus related to the theme. Although American composer Ross Lee Finney, who studied with Nadia Boulanger, began his music career playing jazz guitar and piano, he is primarily recognized as a composer of chamber, instrumental, stage, orchestral and choral works. In addition to exploring jazz, American folk song, and world styles, he developed an interest in experimenting with serialism. From 1950, he became interested in time, space and music’s internal and intellectual structures. Finney composed *Spherical Madrigals* in 1948 for conductor Lee Parison while living in Southern California at Claremont. Each madrigal represents the composer’s interest in circles, inspired in part by his acquaintance with Marjorie Holt Nicholson, a colleague at Smith College. After Nicholson dedicated her book, *The Breaking of a Circle*, Finney reciprocated by dedicating this set of madrigals to her.

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Appropriately, the *Spherical Madrigals* begin with a canon prelude “Love is a circle . . .,” illustrated on the front cover of the score as a musical staff in the shape of a circle. The unifying theme of the seven madrigals is the incorporation of 17th century texts on subjects related to a circle, a ball, or sphere. *When again all these rare perfections meet* is a setting from “To A Lady who did Sing Excellently” by Lord Edward Herbert, First Baron of Cherbury. All perfections are “composed in the circle of thy [her] face,” of the excellent, sweet Lady. Elements of a ‘crab canon’ are manifested by the diverging contrapuntal quasi-canonic ascending lines in the voices of the women and descending lines of the male voices. A four-part canon develops in the middle section text painting “the circle of thy face.” In the third section, the tenors and basses form a two-part canon with the women ending the codetta recapitulating some of the musical material from the first section cadencing in E Major.

The third madrigal *His body was an orb* is a setting of John Dryden’s poem “Upon the Death of the Lord Hastings” first published in 1649. Two canons, one at the interval of a fourth (alto and tenor) and the second, at the fifth (soprano and bass) open the madrigal. An animato (animated) middle section incorporates imitative writing between voice parts closing with a homorhythmic cadential passage. A two-part canon between the women and men begins the third section followed by a homophonic codetta on the text “heavens did show” ending in E Major. The text is representative of Dryden’s early writings and the subject matter of the current events of his time, in this case, *Elegies and Epitaphs*, about the premature death of Hastings, who died just as he was entering adulthood and the role of husband. The poem’s theme is physical beauty with abstract concepts from astronomy, a life-long interest of the poet, who compares Hasting’s body initially to a glassy orb and the “Sphere” of Archimedes, making it into a heavenly body, and a work of art. Throughout the text, Dryden develops his mystical or metaphysical interests.

Galaxias’ composer Santiago Veros wrote: “We are all stars, we are to illuminate and be illuminated by those around us. This piece will always remain in my heart because it has been the result of the commission of very luminous people who have given me warmth while I was recovering from a hard setback of health. This work is the adventure of mutual support. We are lighting our way but the neighboring stars – those people who are our loved ones on any plane of existence – create and guide that way with more light than we are capable of perceiving.”

Galaxias is dedicated to the seven “luminaries” referenced above.

Stephen Chatman is professor of composition at the University of British Columbia and one of Canada’s finest and prolifically performed composers. *Thou Whose Harmony Is the Music of the Spheres* was composed in 1994 for the First Unitarian Society of Madison, WI. The lyrical instrumental part creates an “other-world feeling” tone painting the first line of the poem by Robert French Leavens. This final selection ends our performance with a long crescendo on the text “May there be a new harmony so we shall return to our many duties with fresh courage, with rejoicing. And with eagerness,” culminating with a quiet, meditational “Amen.”

– William M. Folger

poemanalysis.com/george-meredith/lucifer-in-starlight/
www.wmich.edu/mus-theo/courses/keys.html

PROGRAM NOTES

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Dr. Maarten Pereboom, *Dean, Fulton School of Liberal Arts*

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