

MADE in BALTIMORE, Too

PROGRAM: Part 1

The Campers at Kitty Hawk

Michael Dellaira/John dos Passos

Animal Crackers:

1. The Panther

2. The Cow

3. The Firefly

Eric Whitacre/Ogden Nash

Half the World

Dale Trumbore/Frederick Douglass

Virginia Arey alto

On the Poetic Muse

Michael Rickelton/George Moses Horton

The Heart that Loveth Me

Douglas Buchanan/Anonymous 16th c.

Come ye and let us go up to the mountain

Katharine Lucke/Micah 4: 1-4

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David Fisher/Rachel Eliza Griffiths

they get it from *Privilege*

Ted Hearne/David Simon

Joshua Bornfield tenor

For Martin

Judah Adashi/Keith Snipes

Keith Snipes baritone

The Least of These

Keith Snipes, arr. Brian Bartoldus

Keith Snipes baritone

Brian Bartoldus piano

Patrick Klink drum kit

Joshua Bornfield bass

May the Work I've Done Speak for Me

Sullivan Pugh, arr. Colin Lett

Joshua Bornfield tenor

Brian Bartoldus piano

Patrick Klink drum kit

INTERMISSION

PROGRAM: Part 2

Waldesstille *from Lyric Pieces Op 71 No 4*

Edvard Grieg

Lura Johnson *piano*

The Spruce *from The Trees: Five Piano Pieces Op 75 No 5*

Jean Sibelius

Lura Johnson *piano*

Evening Prayer *from Hansel und Gretel*

Engelbert Humperdinck, arr Lowell Liebermann

Lura Johnson *piano*

Waldesrauschen *from Two Concert Etudes S 145 No 1*

Franz Liszt

Lura Johnson *piano*

weary Limbs//me to the Nile (World Premiere)

Daniel Sabzghabaei

Sarah Bruns *soprano*

Soyoung Park *soprano*

Lura Johnson *piano*

Come to the Woods

Jake Runestad/John Muir



Librettos

The Campers at Kitty Hawk

John das Passos

On December seventeenth nineteen hundred and three Bishop Wright of the United Brethren received a telegram from his boys Wilbur and Orville, who'd gotten it into their heads to spend their vacation in a little camp out on the dunes of the North Carolina coast with a homemade glider they'd knocked together themselves. The telegram read: SUCCESS FOUR FLIGHTS THURSDAY MORNING AGAINST TWENTY ONE MILE WIND STARTED FROM ENGINE POWER ALONE.

The figures were a little wrong but the fact remains a couple of young bicycle mechanics from Dayton Ohio had designed and flown for the first time ever a practical airplane.

In those days flying machines were the big laugh of all the crackerbarrel philosophers. They were practical mechanics; when they needed anything they built it themselves.

They hit on Kitty Hawk on the great dunes and sandy banks that stretch south to Hatteras seaward. Overhead the gulls and swooping terns, fishhawks and cranes flapping across the salt marshes.

They were alone there and figured out the loose sand was as soft as anything they could find to fall in, taking off again and again from Kill Devil Hill they learned to fly.

Aeronautics became the sport of the day, congratulated by the czar, crown prince, the King of Italy, King Edward for universal peace.

Taking off again and again they learned to fly. In the rush of new names the Brothers Wright passed from the headlines: Bleriot, Farman, Curtiss, Ferber, Esnault, Petrie, Delagrange can blur the memory of the chilly December day two shivering bicycle mechanics first felt their homemade contraption soar into the air, above the dunes of Kitty Hawk.

I released the wire that held the machine to the track. The machine started forward into the wind. Wilbur ran at the side holding the wing. The machine started slowly facing twenty seven mile wind, it lifted from the track. Wilbur was able to stay with it until it lifted from the track after a forty foot run. The course of the flight up and down was erratic, the first flight in the history of the world. The machine carried a man by his own power into the air in full flight forward without reduction of speed landed at a point as high as that from which it started.

When these points had been firmly established we packed our goods and returned home knowing that the age of the flying machine had come at last.

Animal Crackers

Ogden Nash

1. The Panther

The panther is like a leopard except it hasn't been peppered.
If you behold a panther crouch prepare, prepare to say, "ouch."
Better yet if called by a panther, don't anther.

2. The Cow

The cow is of the bovine ilk
One end is moo
The other milk.

3. The Firefly

The firefly's flame is something for which science has no name.
I can think of nothing eerier than flying around with an
unidentified glow on a person's posterior.

Half the World

Frederick Douglass

Any man can be brave when the danger is over,
go to the front when there is no resistance.
rejoice when the battle is fought and the victory is won;
but it is not so easy to venture upon a field untried
with one-half the whole world against you.
Such a truth is woman's right to equal liberty with man.
She was born with it. It was hers before she comprehended it.
It is inscribed upon all the powers and faculties of her soul
and no custom, law or usage can ever destroy it.

She is her own best representative.
We can neither speak for her, nor vote for her,
nor act for her, nor be responsible for her.
Her right to be and to do is as full, complete and perfect
as the right of any man on earth.

When a great truth once gets abroad in the world,
no power on earth can imprison it.
or prescribe its limits, or suppress it.
It is bound to go on till it becomes the thought of the world.

On the Poetic Muse

George Moses Horton

Far, far above this world I soar,
And almost nature lose,
Aerial regions to explore,
With this ambitious Muse.

My towering thoughts with pinions rise,
Upon the gales of song,
Which waft me through the mental skies,
With music on my tongue.

My Muse is all on mystic fire,
Which kindles in my breast;
To scenes remote she doth aspire,
As never yet exprest.

Wrapt in the dust she scorns to lie,
Call'd by new charms away;
Nor will she e'er refuse to try
Such wonders to survey.

Such is the quiet bliss of soul,
When in some calm retreat,
Where pensive thoughts like streamlets roll,
And render silence sweet;

And when the vain tumultuous crowd
Shakes comfort from my mind,
My muse ascends above the cloud
And leaves the noise behind.

With vivid flight she mounts on high
Above the dusky maze,
And with a perspicacious eye
Doth far 'bove nature gaze.

The Heart That Loveth Me

Anonymous, 16th century English

That heart my heart hath in such grace
That of two hearts one heart make we;
That heart hath brought my heart in case
To love that heart that loveth me.

For one the like unto that heart
Never was, nor is, nor never shall be,
Nor never like cause set this apart
To love that heart that loveth me.

Which cause giveth cause to me and mine
To serve that heart of sovereignty,
And still to sing this latter line:
To love that heart that loveth me.

Whatever I say, whatever I sing,
Whatever I do, that heart shall see

That I shall serve with heart loving
That loving heart that loveth me.

This knot thus knit, who shall untwine,
Since we that knit it do agree
To loose not nor slip, but both incline
To love that heart that loveth me?

Farewell, of hearts that heart most fine,
Farewell, dear heart, heartly to thee,
And keep this heart of mine for thine
As heart for heart, for loving me.

Come ye and let us go up to the mountain

Micah 4:1-4

But in the latter days it shall come to pass,
That the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established
on the top of the mountains,
And it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow into it,
And many nations shall go and say,

Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah,
and to the house of the God of Jacob,
And he will teach us of his ways
and we will walk in his paths.

For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem:
And he will judge between many people
and will decide concerning strong nations afar off

And they shall beat their swords into plowshare,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

But they shall sit every man under his vine
and under his fig-tree:
And none shall make him afraid:
for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it.

Come ye...

And we will walk in the name of Jehovah
our God forever and ever.

Rachel Eliza Griffiths

Your names toll in my dreams.
 I pick up tinsel in the street. A nameless god
 streaks my hand with blood. I look at the lighted trees
 in windows and the spinkles of pine tremble
 in warm rooms. The flesh of home, silent.
 How quiet the bells of heaven must be, cold
 with stars who cannot rhyme their brilliance
 to our weapons. What rouses our lives each moment?
 Nothing by life dares dying. My memory, another obituary.
 My memory is a cross. Face down. A whistle in high grass.
 A shadow pouring down the sill of calamity.
 Your names wake me in the nearly dark hour.
 The candles in our windows flicker
 where your faces peer in, ask us
 questions light cannot answer.

4. they get it from Privilege

David Simon

we pretend to need them
 we pretend to educate the kids
 but we don't
 and they're not foolish
 they get it

For Martin

Keith Snipes

I will rise each day
 before the morning sun
 filled with hope for the future
 with victories won
 I will map out a course
 for the things undone.

The Least of These

Keith Snipes

There's a little girl trying to read in a room that has no heat.
 There's a little boy with no toys and nothing at all to eat.
 There's a father with a plan but no one to help him through his plight.
 There's a mother who's likely to cry herself to sleep tonight

Mama used to say, "it doesn't grow on trees,"
but we are only human and we all have needs,
so what good is the money if it doesn't take care of the least of these?

There's a neighborhood where all the good is buried beneath despair,
and the people there, they fall sick from the filth that lingers in the air,
there's a school with no tools and help is so hard to come by,
There is great demand, but not much by way of supply.

May the Work I've Done

May the work I've done speak for me,
May the work I've done speak for me.
When I'm resting in my grave, there is nothing that can be said,
May the work I've done speak for me.

May the life I live speak for me,
May the life I live speak for me,
When the best I try to live, my mistakes he will forgive,
May the life I live speak for me.

May the serv'ce I give speak for me,
May the serv'ce I give speak for me.
When I've done the best I can and my friends don't understand,
May the serv'ce I give speak for me.

The work I've done, it seems so small,
Sometimes it seems like nothing at all,
But when I stand before my God, I want to hear him say, "Well done,"
May the work I've done speak for me.

weary Limbs // me to the Nile

Frances Ellen Watkins Harper

The placid lakes
And emerald meadows, the snowy crest
Of distant mountains, the ancient rocks
That dripped with honey, the hills all bathed
In light and beauty; the shady groves
And peaceful vistas, the vines opprest
With purple riches, the fig trees fruit-covered
Green and golden, the pomegranates with crimson
Blushes, the olives with their darker clusters,
Rose before [me] like a vision, full of beauty
And delight.

[...]

There I lay, dreaming of lilies fair,
Of lotus flowers and past delights, and all

The bright, glad hopes, that give to early life
Its glow and flush
[....]

lead

Me to the Nile, where I might bathe my weary
Limbs within the cooling flood, and gather
Healing from the sacred stream.

Gracious Saviour, when life's day-dreams
Melt and vanish from the sight,
May our dim and longing vision
Then be blessed with light, more light.

Come to the Woods

John Muir, adapted by Jake Runestad

Another glorious day, the air as delicious
to the lungs as nectar to the tongue.

The day was full of sparkling sunshine,
and at the same time enlivened with one of
the most bracing wind storms.

The mountain winds bless the forests with love.
They touch every tree, not one is forgotten.

When the storm began to sound,
I pushed out into the woods to enjoy it.
I should climb one of the trees for a wider look.

The sounds of the storm were glorious with
wild exuberance of light and motion.
Bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round,
in this wild sea of pines.

The storm-tones died away, and turning toward the east,
I beheld the trees, hushed and tranquil.
The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say,
"Come to the woods, for here is rest."

Program Notes

In March of 2022, Handel Choir presented *Made in Baltimore* as a love letter to our hometown, celebrating the composers, poets, performers, and artists of all stripes who enrich the life of our beloved Charm City. Thanks to the overwhelmingly positive response from our audience, we are thrilled to once again lift up the myriad talented voices of our community in tonight's presentation of *Made in Baltimore, Too*.

Our first three offerings feature lyrics by famed Baltimoreans. Michael Dellaira sets the tale of the Wright Brothers' historic flight as rapid fire prose in *The Campers at Kitty Hawk* (text by Baltimore novelist John Dos Passos), evoking both the excited staccato of a news telegraph as well as the throbbing hum of their new-fangled flying machine. Eric Whitacre indulges his more whimsical side in the first volume of *Animal Crackers* (text by Ogden Nash), a veritable miniature zoo of punnery. In *Half the World*, Dale Trumbore speaks to our better angels via the words of Frederick Douglass, as the great orator and abolitionist argues passionately for women's suffrage.

With numerous long-established and celebrated music schools in the region, it is no surprise that Baltimore has given rise to so many talented composers. The remainder of our program lifts up compositions by ten Baltimore musicians, a small segment of the incredible new music scene surrounding us.

Michael Rickelton's *On the Poetic Muse* sets words by George Moses Horton, the first African-American poet published in the United States. Horton is one of three lyricists on our program who was born into slavery, a chilling reminder of how deeply this horrific institution stained the soil of our native Maryland. Rickelton's setting captures the sense of blissful retreat provided by Horton's titular muse. Douglas Buchanan finds a transportive experience closer to home in *The Heart that Loveth Me*, written for the baptism of his daughter. Handel Choir boasts a special connection with composer Katharine Lucke, who was the primary force behind the founding of our ensemble in the mid-1930s. Lucke was the first woman to receive a doctorate from the Peabody Conservatory, later joining the faculty and teaching both piano and harmony. The striking opening of *Come Ye and Let Us Go Up to the Mountain* displays Lucke's command of both these areas of professional expertise in its bold organ writing and lush chords, as well as a nod to Baroque music in its opening choral recitative.

The struggle to right societal wrongs is a potent recurring theme in Baltimore's artistic scene, as heard through the selections that close the first half of the concert. 26, David Fisher's response to the Sandy Hook massacre, paints a damning portrait of America's relationship with guns. The tolling names of the dead first invoke cries of grief that crescendo with increasing urgency and anger. Ted Hearne builds a similar sense of tension in "they get it" from *Privilege* through insistent repetitions of "we pretend to need them," culminating in the explosive tenor soloist's cry, "but we don't." Former Baltimore Sun reporter David Simon spoke

these words about how we have failed our inner-city youth, a topic he tackled in his published books and the famed TV series *The Wire*. Poet, actor, and singer Keith Snipes responds to the pain of the world with personal resolve and public dedication in the lyrics of Judah Adashi's *For Martin*. Handel Choir is privileged to perform this work with Mr. Snipes as our soloist, as well as to share a new choral arrangement of his song *The Least of These*. The biblical themes of this jazz ballade provide a fitting transition to *May the Work I've Done Speak for Me*, arranged by Morgan State graduate Colin Lett.

The second half of our program trades the bustle of the city for the beauty of the outdoors. Baltimore Symphony Orchestra pianist Lura Johnson has curated a solo piano set of Romantic character pieces that portray the grandeur, elegance, and even the perils of the forest. Edvard Grieg's *Waldesstille* begins as the picture of calm, with a lyrical, nocturne-like melody. While Grieg structures the work as a simple binary song form, he surprises in the second half with unexpected silences and interjections in foreign keys. These reimaginings defy our expectations, imparting emotional depth and an air of nostalgia. Jean Sibelius presents a more domesticated botanical scene in the fifth and final movement of his suite *The Trees*. With its cloying harmonies and waltz rhythm, one could be forgiven for mistakenly thinking that 'The Spruce' was the name of a Parisian café beloved by the composer. The 'Evening Prayer' from Engelbert Humperdinck's opera *Hansel and Gretel* takes place in a scene that practically defines German Romanticism: two protagonists are lost in the woods, away from home and vulnerable to all number of unseen threats. Before lying down to sleep, they say their prayers, conjuring a brief oasis of serenity in the midst of the surrounding darkness. Rustling leaves provide the virtuosic accompaniment of Liszt's *Waldesrauschen*, first dancing above a wandering tenor line before supporting the soaring melody from below.

The wonders of the natural world continue to be a central theme in our final two selections, both composed by graduates of Peabody's composition program. Daniel Sabzghabaei is the **winner of the 2023 Handel Choir Emerging Composers Competition**, and we are honored to present the world premiere of *weary Limbs // me to the Nile*, commissioned specifically for tonight's concert. The text of the piece is drawn from Baltimore-born poet, novelist, and abolitionist Frances Harper, whose epic poem *Moses: A Story of the Nile* (1869) uses the biblical narrative of Jewish exodus as an allegory for the Great Migration north of formerly enslaved peoples following the American Civil War. Sharp accented chords sympathetically vibrate with undampened strings, inviting deep listening to the resonant overtones of the piano. The repeated choral mantra of "the placid lakes" comes into view slowly, like a distant memory that, once brought to light, begets deluge of connected sensory experiences. After the poet admits that these images are only a dream, she asks to be led "to the Nile, where I might bathe my weary limbs." Sabzghabaei closes with a chorale-like benediction that melts into further exploration of the piano's sympathetic resonance.

Rather than a distant memory, forests serve as a vibrant revelation in Jake Runestad's *Come to the Woods*. Runestad drew its lyrics from the writings of famed naturalist John Muir, an early advocate for wilderness preservation and co-founder of the Sierra Club. Frequent choral exclamations of "another glorious day" bind the work together, its spritely optimism alternating with moments of near religious reverence for the beauty of the American wild. These two effects blend in Runestad's rapturous closing bars, inviting the listener to "come to the woods, for here is rest."

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Notes from the composer, Daniel Sabzghabaei

Emerging from a triptych of texts from 19th-century poet and Baltimore native, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, *wearry Limbs // me to the Nile* is a work examining the intertwining of memory and time; a work about aging and seasons of life; a work about remembering and forgetting; a work exploring the weight and power of nostalgia; a work blossoming from great stimulus and quiet introspection. Memories and sounds nestle into each other, with the piano acting as an arbiter of remembrance and recollection, its sharp attacks leaving afterimages of chords dancing in the space, stitching together the multiple sections of the work, all blanketed by nostalgic embraces from the group and solo voices.

Gracious Saviour, when life's day-dreams
Melt and vanish from the sight,
May our dim and longing vision
Then be blessed with light, more light.

- from Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's *Let the Light Enter*

At the outset of composing the piece, I sent my assembled texts to my partner Louna Dekkar-Vargas, who gave the thoughtful response below, which guided the form and development of the work:

What I find most interesting in these texts is the tension between lush visions and faltering/dimming of the senses.

It makes me think of aging, of renunciation, maybe also of the grace in accepting this process, creating a meaningful counterpoint between sensuous stimulus (highly valued in the art and larger human world) and a state of non-stimulus, of quiet, non-attachment (related to disability and hard for most abled people to grasp/value).

It makes me think of my grandma who is losing her sight, her smell, her hearing, her interest in the outside world, but who still is fully conscious, and has a pretty loud voice that surprises me in its vivacity.



Laura Johnson

Steinway Artist Laura Johnson is celebrated by critics and audiences for her insightful, emotionally impactful performances. *The Washington Post* describes hearing her play as “one of life’s great pleasures.” *The Baltimore Sun* praises her “surging expressive force... impressive bravura...” and “exceptional vitality, color, and impact.”

Performing more than one hundred concerts annually as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral pianist, Laura captures, distills, and powerfully communicates the spirit and personality of the music she performs. She describes her mission this way: “My goal is to vividly and thoroughly bring to life the essence and true character of the music, the way an actor embodies a role with full commitment.”

Laura is Resident Pianist of the Baltimore Symphony and Principal Pianist of the Delaware Symphony. She has also enjoyed success both on the concert stage and in commercial recordings as a member of several chamber ensembles. In 2018-2019 Laura created and performed the entire Well-Tempered Clavier of J.S. Bach interspersed with the complete Preludes and Fugues of Dmitri Shostakovich, with an emphasis on the striking connections between the works.

Though she is versatile in any genre from Baroque to contemporary, Laura has a predilection for composers from the Germanic tradition, particularly Brahms, whose chamber works have become a specialty. She has performed the complete Violin Sonata cycle with Baltimore Symphony Concertmaster Jonathan Carney and Annapolis Symphony Concertmaster Netanel Draiblate. In 2015, following her prizewinning performance in the International Johannes Brahms Competition, she joined the staff of the organization, serving as the chamber music partner for the Cello Division from 2016-2018 and joining the jury of the Piano Division in 2019.



Daniel Reza Sabzghabaei (سبزقبايي) (رضا دانيال)

Daniel Reza Sabzghabaei is a creator is interested in looking at time through different lenses: unpacking notions of tradition, exploring memories of those past, and investigating nostalgic frameworks that lean forward.

His music has been commissioned and presented by organizations including: the GRAMMY-winning New York Youth Symphony, JACK Quartet, National Sawdust, the International Contemporary Ensemble, Ensemble Proton Bern, loadbang, the Duisburg Philharmonic, the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Intimacy of

Creativity Festival, the American Composers Orchestra, TAK Ensemble, Beth Morrison Projects, the New York Festival of Song, bassist Robert Black, the Banff Centre, Contemporaneous, Guerilla Opera, the Moab Music Festival, Chorus Austin, the Young New Yorkers Chorus, Pro Coro Canada, The Esoterics, OPERA America, and VocalEssence among others.

Daniel recently completed his doctorate at Cornell, where his dissertation focused on Persian Choral Music. Outside of music and interdisciplinary projects, Daniel also translates Persian poetry.



Keith Snipes

Keith Snipes is an actor, poet, vocalist, and songwriter. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, Keith started acting at the age of 16, after landing a summer job that focused on the arts. Gifted with a melodious singing voice, his first two theatrical performances were both in musical productions, *West Side Story* and *Porgy & Bess*.

Keith's primary musical influence was his mother, Daisy Mae Snipes. Under her guidance, he and his siblings would perform as if they were a professional gospel choir. His mother, who as a child sang with the famed gospel singer Shirley Ceasar, taught her children how to deliver a song with poise and confidence.

It was not until his mother transitioned from this plane that Keith, almost suddenly, began to seriously think of himself as a singer and songwriter. The first song he wrote is about his mother. He wrote it as he sat by her hospital bed, which was surrounded by liquids. The song is aptly entitled, "Bed of Water." According to Keith, the song takes the listener from the bed of water his mother carried him in for nine months to the bed of water he prayed would bring his mother through.

Bed of Water is just one of the emotionally charged soulful songs on his debut EP. It is filled with socially conscious songs and politically poignant poetry. Keith is determined to say something meaningful whenever he writes and sings a song.