

# Vox Grata

WOMEN'S CHOIR

Presents

## Operation Sing!

*A Musical Protest Against Human Trafficking*

with

Guest Composer, Elizabeth Alexander

Jeanette MacCallum and Susan Kelly, Conductors

John Semingson, Pianist

Second Presbyterian Church

Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Westminster Presbyterian Church

Thursday, May 18, 2017

Free will offering to benefit End Slavery Tennessee

# Operation Sing!

Please silence all cell phones and pagers for the duration of the program.

## *Confronting the Problem*

<b>I Cannot Dance, O Lord from <i>Songs of Meditation</i></b>	Stephen Paulus
<b>Out of the Morning</b>	Daniel J. Hall
<b>Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery</b> <i>Anna Horne, Elizabeth Stroud, Erica Scaramuzza and Annabelle Absar, soloists</i>	Elizabeth Alexander
<b>Remarks and Survivor Testimonial</b>	End Slavery Tennessee

## *Our Response*

<b>Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child</b> <i>Nancy Williams-Nettles, soloist</i>	Spiritual/arr. Rosephanye Powell
<b>Even When He Is Silent</b> <i>We dedicate this song to the women served by End Slavery Tennessee</i>	Kim André Arnesen
<b>I Dream a World</b>	Joan Szymko
<b>Song of Ezekiel</b>	Michael Torke

# Vox Grata Women's Choir

## Soprano 1

Hannah Baisley  
Catherine Birdsong Broyles  
Brianna Daugherty  
Anna Horne  
Anne Louise Jones  
Aimee Moiso  
Diana Neely  
Libby Skolnik  
Leigh Sutherland  
Sharon Warfield

## Soprano 2

Jan Allison  
Jennifer Barnes  
Emily Beavers  
Lisa Benton  
Katy Ferrell  
Susan Kelly  
Tracy Monaghan  
Anne Reeve-Osborne  
Jenna Payne  
Erica Scaramuzza  
Elizabeth Stroud

## Alto 1

Annabelle Absar  
Julie Birdsong  
Kelly Christie  
Colleen Halfmann  
Jane-Coleman Harbison  
Amy Kadish  
Jane Kirchner  
Suzie Lane  
Mary Louise McCullough  
Rosie Smith

## Alto 2

Carol Callaway-Lane  
Sylvia Leins  
Denise Linn  
Caitlyn Lovell  
Jeanette MacCallum  
Linda McFadyen-Ketchum  
Mareike Sattler  
Nancy Williams-Nettles

**Jeanette MacCallum** is the Director of Music Ministries at Second Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN and founder and Artistic Director of *Vox Grata*. She previously served as an Adjunct Professor in music theory and history at Belmont and Lipscomb Universities. In addition, she served as the Director of Choral Activities at Saint Cecilia Academy in Nashville, TN, from 2002 to 2012, where she conducted various ensembles and taught AP Music Theory. During her tenure at Saint Cecilia, the Advanced Choir received superior ratings at all regional and state adjudication festivals in which it participated. In addition, the St. Cecilia Advanced Choir performed at ACDA and TMEA state conferences. Mrs. MacCallum led the St. Cecilia Choir on performance tours to Carnegie Hall, Canada and Italy. In 2007, the Saint Cecilia Choir performed by invitation at the *Ospedale della Pietà* and the *Ospedale dei Derelitti* in Venice. Her students earned positions in numerous All-State and ACDA Honor Choirs.

Reared in Princeton, New Jersey, Mrs. MacCallum's passion for choral music began as a member of the distinguished Princeton High School Choir. She received her musical education at the Eastman School of Music and Belmont University, and received the Master of Church Music degree from Belmont. A frequent adjudicator and clinician, Mrs. MacCallum has directed choirs at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University, as well as at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville, TN. She is the President-Elect for Tennessee ACDA and has served as the Tennessee Chair for Women's Choir Repertoire and Standards. Mrs. MacCallum is the Past President and Treasurer of the Middle Tennessee Vocal Association. She is also the author of "*The Sacred Choral Works of the Venetian Ospedali*," published by GIA in "*Conducting Women's Choirs: Strategies for Success*," Debra Spurgeon, Editor and Compiler (2012).

**Dr. Susan Kelly** was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Music/Choral Director at Tennessee State University. She directs the University Choir and Meistersingers, teaches classes in Music Education and Conducting, and teaches Applied Voice. Aside from her work at TSU, Susan is the associate conductor for the Vox Grata Women's Choir, and serves as a soprano section leader at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Additionally, she sings soprano with the Tennessee Chamber Chorus, a professional choir based in East Tennessee.

Before coming to Tennessee State University, Dr. Kelly taught at Abington Heights High School in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, where she directed the 120-voice Concert Choir, the Women's Ensemble, the Men's Ensemble, and served as music director for the musical. She was also the director of the Cantare Choir of The Choral Society of Northeast Pennsylvania, a community high school women's ensemble that performed at both state ACDA and PMEA conferences. She also served as the Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church of Clarks Summit, and sang soprano with The Lyric Consort, an eight-voice vocal ensemble.

Susan holds undergraduate degrees in Music Education and English Education from Wilkes University, a Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance and Choral Conducting from Temple University, and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Choral Conducting from the University of South Carolina. Prior to her move to TSU, Susan was active in both PMEA, in which she served as Choral Coordinator of District 9, and ACDA, in which she served as President-Elect Designate of ACDA-PA. Currently she is serving as the Ensemble-Specific Repertoire and Resources Chair for ACDA-TN.

**Dr. John W. Semingson** serves as Accompanist for Vox Grata Women's Choir. Since 2001, John has served as the Director of Music Ministries for Westminster Presbyterian Church – Nashville, where he oversees a multi-faceted music program of nine choirs involving over 200 children, youth, and adults. John holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in choral conducting, the Master of Church Music in both conducting and organ, and the Bachelor of Music in organ performance. He has conducted and/or served as an accompanist for church, community, and university choirs in Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee over the past 30 years.

## Mission of Vox Grata

Vox Grata is comprised of joyful women who, out of gratitude for the fullness of their own lives, possess a desire to sing together for the benefit of others. The group performs repertoire that expresses a uniquely feminine spirit, especially works that promote the best interests of women in society. Vox Grata sings concert programs that directly benefit the needs of women in the Nashville community. Vox Grata is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

To be added to our mailing list, for information about supporting Vox Grata or to find out about auditions and upcoming events, please visit our website at [www.voxgrata.com](http://www.voxgrata.com), or visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/VoxGrata>.

100% of the contributions received at this program will benefit End Slavery Tennessee whose mission is to promote healing of human trafficking survivors and strategically confront slavery in our state. All donations to End Slavery Tennessee are tax-deductible.

## Special Thanks

**Vox Grata Board of Directors** – Sallie Bailey, St. Clair Blue, Kelly Christie, Karen Weir, Sylvia Leins, Susan Hassell, Laurie Cooper, Jennie Renwick, Jane Kirchner, Linda Koon, Doug MacCallum, Jeanette MacCallum, and Franco Scaramuzza

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**Jeff Davidson**, videography

**Franco Scaramuzza and threeseventwo creative media**, graphic design

**Rev. Dr. Mary Louise McCullough**, Pastor, Second Presbyterian Church

**Dr. John Semingson**, Director of Music Ministries, Westminster Presbyterian Church

**Second Presbyterian Church**

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

## Save the Date

**Thursday, November 9, 2017** – Vox Grata presents its fall concert to benefit The Mary Parrish Center for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville

# Texts and Translations

## *Confronting the Problem*

### **I Cannot Dance, O Lord**

I cannot dance, O Lord, unless you lead me.  
If you wish me to leap joyfully, let me see you dance and sing!  
Then I will leap into love, and from love into knowledge,  
and from knowledge into the harvest –  
that sweetest fruit beyond human sense.  
There I will stay with you, whirling.  
--Mechtild of Magdeburg (13<sup>th</sup> century)

### **Out of the Morning**

Will there really be a "Morning"?  
Is there such a thing as "Day"?  
Could I see it from the mountains  
if I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?  
Has it feathers like a Bird?  
Is it brought from famous countries  
of which I have never heard?

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!  
Oh some Wise Men from the skies!  
Please to tell a little Pilgrim  
Where the place called "Morning" lies!  
--Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

## **Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery**

### **1. The Sheer Possibility in the First Place**

The sheer possibility in the first place.  
Unstoppable wanting. Wanting the unstoppable.  
The need for cultivation. The cultivation of need.  
Hard choices. Easy outs.  
High hopes. Slippery slopes.

The allure of order. The desire to acquire.  
Classes of people. People of class.  
The gain of capital. Capital gains.  
The persistent perception of greener grass.

The justification of pride.  
The pride of ownership.  
The ownership of justice.

The tidiness of titles. The convenience of caste.  
Distributions of wealth. A wealth of distributions.

The price of cotton. The price of rice.  
The price of sugar. The price of gold.  
The price of oranges. The price of tomatoes.

The price of keeping the prices low.

The price of beauty. The price of toys.  
The price of plenty. The price of more.  
The price of a hit. The price of a life.  
The price of liberty. The price of anything.

The desire for a fix. The fixation on race.  
The race towards civilization. The civilization of desire.

Chains of command. The commands of corruption.  
The corruption of language. The language of chains.

Classification, misinformation,  
Globalization, collaboration,  
Accumulation, calculation,  
Rationalizations.

## **2. The Existence of Endless Prepositional Possibilities**

As a short-term solution, in the interest of progress,  
'til my head's above the water, 'til my feet are on the ground,  
for the good of the nation, for the company, for my family,  
despite a few misgivings at the present time.  
By hook or crook, behind closed doors,  
beyond our borders as a very last resort,  
between you and me, beyond my control,  
on the cheap, on the sly, with my back against the wall,  
out of sight, out of mind, out of my hands,  
under the radar, under the gun, under the table, around the law,  
in for a penny, in for a pound, in for a lifetime —  
just this once.

## **3. An Unexamined Life**

Longings for chocolate, palaces, pyramids,  
flowers in the winter, rubber and rum.  
What people will do for a little black dress,  
a hand with the children, a carpet, a kiss,  
an immaculate house, an unexamined life.

The price of cotton. The price of rice.  
The price of sugar. The price of gold.  
The price of oranges. The price of tomatoes.  
The price of keeping the prices low.

Looms of fingers. Fields of hands.  
Chests of organs. Pounds of flesh.  
Platters of thighs. Legions of legs.  
Rivers of blood. Heavings of hearts.  
Batteries of arms and backs and shoulders.

Business, pleasure, labor, leisure,  
backers, buyers, brokers, liars,  
winners, losers, dealers, users,  
borrowers, lenders, traders, vendors,  
profits, losses, owners, bosses.

People of means. The means to an end.  
Unheeded rumors. Eager consumers.  
--Elizabeth Alexander (b. 1962)

## *Our Response*

### **Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child**

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, a long ways from home (true believer)!  
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost gone, way off in the heavenly land (true believer)!  
*Bokaya kayakaya* (something terrible has happened); *Nu wo vinowo* (something has happened to mothers).  
Amen.

### **Even When He Is Silent**

I believe in the sun, even when it's not shining. I believe in love, even when I feel it not. I believe in God, even when he is silent.

### **I Dream a World**

I dream a world where man no other man will scorn,  
where love will bless the earth and peace its paths adorn.  
I dream a world where all will know sweet freedom's way,  
where greed no longer saps the soul nor avarice blights our day.  
A world I dream where black or white, whatever race you be,  
will share the bounties of the earth and every man is free.  
I dream a world where wretchedness will hang its head  
and joy, like a pearl, attends the needs of all--  
of such I dream, my world!  
--Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

### **Song of Ezekiel**

And all the trees of the field shall know  
that I, the Lord,  
bring low the high tree,  
lift high the lowly tree,  
wither up the green tree,  
and make the withered tree bloom.

As I, the Lord, have spoken, so will I do.

I, too, will take the crest of the cedar,  
from its topmost branches, tear off a tender shoot,  
and plant it on a high and lofty mountain;  
on the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it.

It shall put forth branches and bear fruit,  
and become a majestic cedar.  
Birds of every kind shall dwell beneath it,  
every winged thing in the shade of its boughs.

# Program Notes

## **I Cannot Dance, O Lord from *Songs of Meditation***

Stephen Paulus

*I Cannot Dance, O Lord* was composed by Stephen Paulus, who passed away on October 19, 2014, at the age of 65, after suffering a debilitating stroke. Raised in Minnesota from age two, Paulus studied piano in his youth and later earned a doctorate degree in composition from the University of Minnesota, where his teachers included Dominick Argento. While a doctoral student in 1973, Paulus, ever a supporter of the music and careers of his colleagues, cofounded the American Composers Forum, still the largest composer-advocacy organization in the United States. His music has been described by critics as rugged, angular, lyrical, lean, rhythmically aggressive, original, often gorgeous, moving, and uniquely American. *I Cannot Dance, O Lord* comes from *The Songs of Meditation*, a set of pieces for female chorus.

## **Out of the Morning**

Daniel J. Hall

*Out of the Morning* was written for Phillip Swan and the University of Miami Women's Chorale and premiered by them in 2002.

There are times in our lives when we feel small and we wonder what the future holds. Even the most basic knowledge of Emily Dickinson's life will reveal that she was no stranger to such sentiment. *Out of the Morning* is a simple yet fervent plea for guidance.

Daniel J. Hall (born 1971) is Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. (Notes by the publisher)

## **Reasons for the Perpetuation of Slavery**

Elizabeth Alexander

Composer's Introductory Words at Premiere Performance Lawrence University, May 28, 2010

*Reasons* is a song about slavery, but it is not a song about American slavery. Although my initial interest in slavery grew from my childhood in the Carolinas, my family background, and my fathers's own interest in the Civil War, I soon discovered that I could not hope to understand the nature of slavery if I limited my research to the Antebellum South. Slavery has been with us since the beginning of recorded time; sometimes it seems like only the names and places have changed:

In centuries past slavery flourished on sugar plantations in Brazil, rubber plantations in the Belgian Congo, farms in pre-Industrial Europe, and the brothels of ancient Rome. Whereas today, slavery can be found on sugar plantations in the Dominican Republic, rubber plantations in Liberia, farms in Florida, and the brothels of Thailand — indeed in brothels all over the world.

In New York City, ownership of child beggars in the late 1800s has given way to ownership of sweatshop workers today.

In Columbia, slaves grow flowers, in India they weave carpets, and in the Ivory Coast they grow 40% of the chocolate in the world.

Of course, most of them are not called slaves. They are called guest workers, indentured servants, quota workers, migrant labor and apprentices. But these seductive synonyms for slavery are about as convincing as calling layoffs “corporate downsizing.”

Our own participation in slavery is complicated now, and often hidden from us. To the extent that we buy countless consumer goods, including clothing, sugar, chocolate, orange juice, handicrafts and automobile tires, we enjoy the fruits of slavery, which are, first and foremost, low prices. To the extent that we resist passing laws requiring documentation of the source of consumer goods — and that proposed legislation is out there — we turn our heads and allow slavery to continue. While experts disagree about exactly how many slaves exist today — 27 million is a common estimate — they all agree that there are more slaves now than there have ever been, at any time.

Okay, here's where the shame and blame start to come forward — which is a natural tendency for compassionate human beings — but let's not go there. It's not that shame and blame aren't warranted; it's just that they don't help our understanding of slavery, or help the situation itself.

Instead, I tried to approach the composition of *Reasons* with as much curiosity as I could muster, with the desire to really get at what drives humans to control other people in such an extreme way. Why do we seem to want more and more stuff, more and more security, more and more leisure? Why do we let low prices drive so many of our decisions? Why does the human race continually fail to live up to its own cherished ideals?

Over time, I've come to believe that slavery occurs simply because we ARE human. The tendencies and temptations which make slavery possible are rooted, sadly but truly, in the depths of every person's heart. An honest understanding of the reasons for the perpetuation of slavery comes not from fingerpointing, but from the willingness to see that the best and worst qualities we observe in ourselves and those we love sometimes do lead down a dark path that can end in human abuse.

For me, the most powerful lyrics in *Reasons* reflect those qualities which I recognize in myself — “the allure of order,” “the pride of ownership,” the persistent perception of greener grass,” “high hopes,” “slippery slopes,” and my own longings for chocolate and a neat and tidy house. If I'm at all honest, I know I've taken convenient shortcuts in my life which fell far short of my own ethical convictions. If I can understand these desires and shortcomings in myself, and begin to see them with compassion — if I can say “Ah, this is part of what my species struggles with” — I maybe can arrive at a place where healing and change can start to happen.

How audacious — the notion that by singing honest and compassionate songs together, we participate in a radical act of love. Not a blind love, but a love that is open-eyed and challenging. A love which can, every once in a while, change the course of history. This is the audacity with which I wrote this song, the audacity which leads singers to sing their most powerful songs, day after day, again and again.

### **Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child**

Spiritual/arr. Rosephanye Powell

Rosephanye Powell states: “In this arrangement, I sought to express the final moments of a slave who has been whipped and beaten at the hands of the slave owner or overseer, as his/her life ebbs away. The African words are translated ‘something terrible has happened, something has happened to mothers.’ As the slave drifts away to freedom (death), in the midst of his/her pain, memories of the motherland and of the mother who was sold away engulf the slave. The African words ‘Bokayan nu wo vinowo’ represent these painful memories. They also depict the African priests’ drawing the slave’s soul/spirit back to Africa through death. The lofty [Oo]’s of the first sopranos beginning at measure 24, paint musically the slave’s longing to depart this world and soar to freedom/heaven. In measure 37, the slave’s spirit is finally released from the slave’s body and ascends to heaven—the homeland, and freedom. Measures 42-44, depict the African priests, hovering over the dead slave, delivering final rites in death, as the slave breathes his/her final breaths. Upon the “Amen,” the slave through death finds peace, and returns to the homeland, heard in the picardy third (major chord).”

### **Even When He Is Silent**

Kim André Arnesen

*Even When He Is Silent* was commissioned in 2011 by the St. Olaf Festival in Trondheim, Norway. It was composed in two versions—one for women’s choir and one for mixed choir. The text was found written on a wall at a concentration camp after World War II.

Kim André Arnesen (born 1980) grew up in Trondheim and sang in the Nidaros Cathedral Boys’ Choir. His choral experiences as a young boy inspired his earliest compositions. His largest scale works include *Magnificat* (premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Girls’ Choir) and *Requiem* (premiered by the Nidaros Cathedral Boys’ Choir) which received its US premiere in April 2015. (Notes by the publisher)

### **I Dream a World**

Joan Szymko

Joan Szymko (born 1957) is a composer and choral conductor in the Pacific Northwest. Her choral music is characterized by abundant lyricism, rhythmic intensity and vigorous attention to text. Especially noteworthy is her significant contribution to the body of literature for women’s voices.

*I Dream a World* was written for Aurora Chorus and the Pacific Youth Choir, both of Portland, Oregon.

### **Song of Ezekiel**

Michael Torke

*Song of Ezekiel* was premiered in 2001 by the Young People’s Chorus of New York City. In the words of the composer, “the prophet Ezekiel lived in exile and was very concerned about the restoration of Israel. These verses that I have chosen – about high trees and low trees – can serve as a political metaphor for the kings and leaders of the time, that through God, He will lift the ‘lowly tree,’ and make the ‘withered tree bloom,’ restoring Israel to its majesty, and bringing down her enemies...it is only through God that a branch planted will bear fruit...therefore, God has the power to bring low the high and lift high the low.”

Torke’s post-minimalist compositional style reflects the influence of Steve Reich. His blending of melodic cells with a series of syllables produces a distinctively textured work based upon a handful of basic ideas.

Friends of  
*Vox Grata*  
WOMEN'S CHOIR

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The mission of End Slavery Tennessee is to promote the healing of human trafficking survivors and strategically confront slavery in our state.

Every victim has a name, face and heart breaking story. They certainly never hoped for what happened to them but together we will give hope, provide healing and empower youth to avoid entrapment.

The average victim is dead within 7 years after being trafficked.

It is estimated 94 minors are trafficked in TN each month.

Average age a child is trafficked in 13 for girls and 12 for boys.

Survivor Quote: "I would be dead if it hadn't been for everything you guys have done for me. I don't know what my life would have been like without this program."

We can't do what we do without you. Remember Love Changes everything and you can be that love!

To learn more or give, please visit [endslaverytn.org](http://endslaverytn.org)