

Vox Grata

WOMEN'S CHOIR

Presents

“Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor”

Jeanette MacCallum and Susan Kelly, Conductors
John Semingson, Pianist

Westminster Presbyterian Church
Thursday, November 8, 2018

Second Presbyterian Church
Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Free will offering to benefit Sew for Hope

Give Me Your Tired, Your Poor

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

We Have Come (<i>text by Háfēz, 14th century</i>) <i>Mareike Sattler and Dina Mañalac, soloists</i> <i>Alan Fey, percussion; Marie Winget, viola</i>	Abbie Betinis
Song of the Refugees (<i>text by the composer</i>)	Ruth Huber
Shar Ki Ri (Mountain to the East) (<i>traditional Tibetan text</i>) <i>Alan Fey, percussion</i>	Andrea Clearfield
Famine Song (<i>text by Vida</i>) <i>Amanda Craft and Leigh Sutherland, soloists</i>	arr. Matthew Culloton
As Costureiras (The Sewing Girls) (<i>text by the composer</i>) <i>We dedicate this song to the women served by Sew for Hope</i>	Heitor Villa-Lobos
A Prayer for Peace (<i>text by Thich Nhat Hanh</i>)	Paula Foley Tillen
Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe (<i>text adapted by the composer</i>) <i>Nancy Williams-Nettles, soloist</i> <i>Alan Fey, percussion</i>	Joan Szymko
Light, Beauty, Peace (<i>Chinese proverb</i>)	Joan Szymko
The New Colossus (<i>text by Emma Lazarus</i>)	Kevin Memley

Vox Grata Women's Choir

Soprano 1

Hannah Baisley
Catherine Birdsong Broyles
Brittany Carnegis
Libby Castleman
Anne Louise Jones
Dina Mañalac
Mary Catherine Mousourakis
Diana Neely
Leigh Sutherland
Sharon Warfield
Jennye Woolf

Soprano 2

Jan Allison
Emily Beavers
Katy Burrows
Amanda Craft
Jj Ebelhar
Susan Kelly
Anne Reeve-Osborne
Jenna Payne

Alto 1

Annabelle Absar
Julie Birdsong
Devin Bradbury
Kelly Christie
Jane-Coleman Cottone
Amy Kadish
Jane Kirchner
Laura Kulp
Suzie Lane
Janet Salyer
Rosie Smith
Krysta Waldrop

Alto 2

Sara Chang
Sylvia Leins
Denise Linn
Caitlyn Lovell
Jeanette MacCallum
Linda McFadyen-Ketchum
Kristine Mains
Mareike Sattler
Karen Weir
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 of 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, teaches Applied Voice, and serves as advisor for Club V, the student vegan organization. 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 and The Cecilia Ensemble, a professional choir based in Augusta, Georgia.

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 President-Elect 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, or visit our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/VoxGrata>.

100% of the contributions received at this program will benefit Sew for Hope whose mission is to enhance the lives of Middle Tennessee refugees through social interaction, where English language, sewing and sewing business skills are shared. All donations to Sew for Hope are tax-deductible.

Special Thanks

Vox Grata Board of Directors – Jan Allison, St. Clair Blue, Karen Weir, Sylvia Leins, Susan Hassell, Laurie Cooper, Jennie Renwick, Jane Ferrell, Vicky Tarleton, Teresa Davidson, Jeanette MacCallum, Kelly Christie and Carla Lovell

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

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

Save the Dates

Sunday, February 24, 2019 – Vox Grata with Alias Chamber Ensemble, Ingram Hall, Blair School of Music, 4:00 PM

Thursday, May 9, and Tuesday, May 14, 2019 – Vox Grata presents Spring concert programs, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Second Presbyterian Church, 7:30 PM

Texts and Translations

We Have Come

(translated from Persian)

We, to this door, seeking neither pride nor glory...we have come.
For shelter from ill-fortune, here...we have come.
Traveling along love's journey, from the borders of nothingness,
now into states of being, all this way...we have come.
O ship of grace, where is thy anchor of forbearance?
For in this ocean of generosity, immersed in sin...we have come.
Hâfez, throw off your woolen kherqe (Sufi cloak), for we, from
behind the caravan, with the fire of sighing "ah!"...we have come.

Song of the Refugees

All over the world, we have wandered searching for shelter, a safe place to rest.
All over the world, we have wandered, fleeing the flames of war, crying:
"Where is peace? Where is peace on earth, goodwill toward all?"
Look into your heart, and find compassion for those who are different, whose ways may seem strange.
Embracing the lost, we embrace each other; harboring others, we harbor ourselves.
For hatred never ceases by hatred, but by love alone is healed.
And there is peace on earth, goodwill toward all.
This is the ancient and eternal law.

Shar Ki Ri (Mountain to the East)

(translated from Tibetan)

Do not look toward the eastern mountain; look instead toward the western mountain.
Look up to the heights and down to the depths of the mountain;
toward the places of wealth, the pure treasure of the dharma.
For this is the root place, the copper-colored paradise of Guru Rinpoche.
Do not look to the hills of India; instead look to the place of pure treasure and excellent perception;
a place of future accomplishment for sentient beings.
May we be prosperous!

Famine Song

Ease my spirit, ease my soul; please free my hands from this barren soil.
Ease my mother, ease my child; earth and sky be reconciled.
Rain, rain, rain.
Weave, my mother; weave, my child; weave your baskets of rushes wild.
Out of heat, under sun, comes the hunger to everyone.
Famine's teeth, famine's claws on the sands of Africa.

As Costureiras (The Sewing Girls)

(translated from Portuguese)

Sadness in their hearts; laughter in their eyes;
singing of their sorrow, the girls are sewing.
Our hopes will not fail us; the threads of life and love are intertwining.
Gaily we're sewing, though new cares may assail us.
Even as those good at divining, we can see a future soon to smile on us.
Sewing, do not cease your sewing; hem the skirts and stitch the blouses.
Charm all those who come for fittings.
Though sometimes your hearts are sighing, keep your bright needles flying.
With each other vying, sewing, stitching, pleating, cutting, tacking, tucking. Ah!

A Prayer for Peace

In beauty, sitting on a lotus flower,
Lord Buddha, quiet and solid.
Your humble disciple,
calm and pure of heart,
forms a lotus flower with the hands,
and offers this heartfelt prayer:
Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions.
Because of your love for all people,
have compassion on us.
Help us to remember we are just one family,
North and South.
Help us rekindle our compassion and brotherhood.
May your compassion help us overcome our hatred.
Humbly, we open our hearts to you.
Water the flowers of our spirits
with your deep understanding;
help our hearts grow light.
Because of your love for all people,
please have compassion on us.
May the merit of this prayer
be transformed into peace.
May each of us realize this,
our deep aspiration.

Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe

Ffe mwe, mwe ffe (*they are us and we are them*)
Ggwanga mujje! (*come to our rescue!*)
Be the change you wish to see.
You can start by looking at me and knowing that I am you and you are me.
We are them and they are we; I am them and they are me.
We belong to each other.

Light, Beauty, Peace

If there is light in the soul, there will be beauty in the person.
If there is beauty in the person, there will be harmony in the house.
If there is harmony in the house, there will be order in the nation.
If there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.
If there is light, there will be beauty; harmony; order; peace.
Peace.

The New Colossus

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
with conquering limbs astride from land to land.
Here at our seawashed, sunset gates shall stand
a mighty woman with a torch, whose flame is the imprisoned lightning,
and her name, Mother of Exiles.
From her beaconhand glows worldwide welcome;
her mild eyes command the airbridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!"
cries she with silent lips.
"Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
the wretched refuse of your teeming shore;
send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Program Notes

We Have Come

Abbie Betinis

Johann Wolfgang Goethe once wrote, “Only with you, Hâfez, do I wish to compete, for the older you get the younger you become...And religion is no obstacle, for if the word ‘Islam’ means to submit to God, we all live and die in Islam.”

Khwajeh Shams al-Din Muhammad Hâfez-e Shirazi (1320-1390) was born in Shiraz, Persia (Iran). He wrote nearly 400 lyric poems called *ghazals*, and is the undisputed master of that particular poetic form. His mystical writing is based on Sufism, a tradition of Islam that is associated both with the Sunni and Shi’a denominations, as well as many other currents of Islam.

We Have Come is an excerpt from a song cycle, *From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez*, commissioned and premiered by The Rose Ensemble (Saint Paul, Minnesota) in 2007. Betinis states: “I was particularly drawn to these four *ghazals* because of the elegant way they depict longing...longing for Truth, longing for Reason, longing for Kindness, Love, and – always – longing for the Beloved. Also, as I was reading, I found that many of Hâfez’s poems seem to have in common beautiful metaphors of transience: fire, breath, breeze.”

Betinis continues, “the music is my own, and not authentically Persian. It is my interpretation of an assortment of influences, including my study of Persian speech, scales and modes, but perhaps also from my distant memory of being four years old and dancing—joyfully and tirelessly—with my Greek relatives to music that whirled feverishly around me.”

Song of the Refugees

Ruth Huber

Ruth Huber has a rich musical background as a pianist, singer, and composer. She grew up in rural Maryland playing both piano and violin, earned a Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance from the University of Maryland, and her first Master’s degree in piano pedagogy from the University of Texas at Austin. After a hiatus from the classical music world as a singer/songwriter, she returned to school and completed a second Master’s in composition from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where she studied with David Conte and Elinor Armer.

Her compositions have won awards from California American Choral Directors Association, The San Francisco Art Song Festival, the San Francisco Conservatory Choral Music Competition, the Austin Music Umbrella Songwriters’ Competition and the Kerrville Folk Festival. She has received commissions from choral groups around the country, and composed music for solo and duo piano, clarinet, and instrumental ensembles. She lives in San Jose, California, where she teaches piano and co-directs the Rainbow Women’s Chorus.

Shar-Ki-Ri (Mountain to the East)

Andrea Clearfield

Shar Ki Ri is excerpted from a large-scale 2012 cantata *Tse Go La (At the Threshold of this Life)* scored for SATB and SSA choruses, chamber orchestra and electronics. The work is inspired by the composer’s fieldwork in the restricted, remote Himalayan region of Lo Monthang in Upper Mustang, Nepal. There, Clearfield recorded and documented indigenous folk music with Katey Blumenthal, ethnomusicologist and anthropologist.

The people of this region, just over the border of Tibet, are ethnically Tibetan. This ancient horse culture is threatened, and efforts are being made to help preserve their music, dance, medicine, religion, language and art. Under the auspices of the Rubin Foundation, Clearfield and Blumenthal recorded 130 songs that had not been previously documented. Their recordings are now part of the University of Cambridge World Oral Literature Project: “an urgent global initiative to document and make accessible endangered oral literatures before they disappear without record.” Some of the original songs that were recorded (including *Shar Ki Ri*) are being taught to Mustang children in NYC as part of a Himalayan language and culture preservation initiative.

Shar Ki Ri is a tro-glu song (common folk song that often includes dance). Three women from the community, Kheng Lhamo, Yandol Dolkar and Pema Dolkar, had a vast knowledge of tro-glu they learned from their elders. *Shar Ki Ri* was one of many songs they performed. Clearfield incorporated the traditional text, melody and rhythm into a contemporary framework.

The *Tse Go La* cantata was co-commissioned by the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, Alan Harler, Artistic Director and. Clearfield incorporated the traditional text, melody, and rhythm into a contemporary framework.

Pennsylvania Girlchoir, member choir of Commonwealth Youth choirs, Susan Ashbaker, Executive Director as a way to bring these songs for the first time to the U.S. This commission was made possible through the Mendelssohn Club Alan Harler New Ventures Fund; a gift of the Pennsylvania Girlchoir class of 2010; from Emilie Carr, in memory of Margaret Owen and the Archie W. and Grace Berry Foundation and was also supported, in part, by a grant from the American Composers Forum, Philadelphia Chapter.

Tse Go La was premiered at Holy Trinity Church, Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, PA on April 29, 2012.

Famine Song

arr. Matthew Culloton

Inspired by stories of Sudanese basket weavers, this song expresses the pain and hope experienced by those in the famine of the 1980s. In the midst of hardship, a wonderful new sense of creativity emerged when women began weaving baskets as a means of survival. Central to the song is a section of improvisation over shifting chords.

The vocal quartet, VIDA, was founded in Bloomington, Indiana in 1995, touring and recording with their unique combination of original songs and traditional folk songs from the Americas and Europe. The subjects of the songs are the struggles and joys we share across vibrantly different cultures.

This arrangement was prepared by Matthew Culloton, Founding Artistic Director of The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists based in Minneapolis.

As Costureiras (The Sewing Girls)

Heitor Villa-Lobos

“Sewing, stitching, pleating, cutting, tacking, tucking,” the working girls in *As costureiras* sing to the repetitive rhythms of their work, dreaming of future love and happiness as they make clothes for the wealthy. This sketch of everyday life in Brazil reveals one side of a multi-faceted composer. When Heitor Villa-Lobos was six, and already performing on the cello, his aunt gave him a copy of the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, awakening a fascination with Bach that would lead him to compose the *Bachianas Brasileiras*. But the young man soon fell under the influence of country folk-songs and the urban street music groups called *chorões*. Rather like Bartók in Hungary, this gifted classical composer traveled the country, cataloguing its musical folklore. During the 1920s he lived in Paris, consorting with musicians and poets of that turbulent period. Later he returned to Brazil, and with the support of president Getúlio Vargas organized choral groups of up to 40,000 school children.

This charming arrangement includes imitation of the sewing machine through the syllables, “la-la-ri-la,” a ostinato pattern that can be heard through various voice parts.

A Prayer for Peace

Paula Foley Tillen

Paula Foley Tillen (born 1958) was a founding member and composer-in-residence of the Milwaukee Choral Artists, the premier professional women’s vocal ensemble of the Midwest (now disbanded). She is an active composer and director for musical theatre productions in the Midwest. She is also the winner of the 2008 Joe Shepley Choral Composition Competition sponsored by Namasté Women’s Choir, Los Angeles, CA.

Thich Nhat Hanh is a Zen Master, poet, and author of over one hundred published titles. A peace and human rights activist, he is known for championing a movement known as “engaged Buddhism”. He was exiled from Vietnam in 1966 when he came to the United States on the first of many humanitarian visits. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967 for his efforts in the peace movement.

This text was used throughout South Vietnam in 1965 in the “Don’t Shoot Your Own Brother” campaign to rouse the willingness to work for peace.

Ffe Mwe, Mwe Ffe

Joan Szymko

This piece was composed in conjunction with a drum circle event at a Portland, Oregon Unitarian Church in which children and adults worked together to make gifts for a sister church in Uganda. Among the Baganda people of Uganda, the drum holds a key position within the community. Drums call the people to dance, worship and come together in times of crisis. The Bantu adage, “*ffe mwe, mwe ffe*”—“they are us and we are them” is a reminder that every member of the community is obliged to help others in time of need. The drum rhythm “*ggwanga mujje*” means “come to my rescue.” When heard, everyone must be ready to rise to action to help.

Szymko composed this piece with the intention of taking the concept “they are us and we are them” even further. Szymko believes that tribalism, while strengthening cultural pride, identity and goodwill can be, in the wider world, a destructive force that perpetuates scapegoating and “us against them” violence. This music begins with a drum call to action. A soloist introduces Mahatma Gandhi’s powerful challenge to “be the change you wish to see,” adding, “we belong to each other,” a reference to Mother Teresa’s quote, “if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.”

Light, Beauty, Peace

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.

The New Colossus

Kevin A. Memley

Kevin A. Memley’s works have received worldwide attention in the choral community. His compositions have been featured in ACDA national and regional conventions. He has served as Assistant Director and Accompanist for the Clovis Unified School District, the San Joaquin Chorale and the Clovis Community College Choir in central California. In 2015, he accepted a full-time position as Music Minister of the Kingsburg Community Church. His passion is to compose, promote music literacy in his community and to mentor young students.