

# *Vox Grata*

WOMEN'S CHOIR

presents

## *Out of Darkness* *A Journey to Hope*

with

Special Guest Artist,  
Tina Milhorn Stallard, Soprano

Jeanette MacCallum, Conductor  
John Semingson, Accompanist

Westminster Presbyterian Church  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Thursday, November 12, 2015

# Out of Darkness: A Journey to Hope

*Please silence all electronic devices for the duration of the program.*

*We request you hold your applause until the Pause and the conclusion of the concert.*

## *We sing to lament*

**Missa brevis in tempore violentiae**

Ron Jeffers

**Kyrie**

**Gloria**

**Psalm 137: “An den Wassern zu Babylon”**

Franz Liszt

*Tina Milborn Stallard, Soprano*

**Reflections from Yad Vashem**

Daniel J. Hall

## *We sing to repent*

**Miserere**

Eva Ugalde

**Et misericordia (from *Magnificat*)**

Kim André Arnesen

*Tina Milborn Stallard, Soprano*

## *Pause*

## *We sing to pray*

**The Peace of Wild Things**

Joan Szymko

*We dedicate this song to the women served by Mother To Mother*

**Prayer for Peace**

Paula Foley Tillen

## *We sing to hope*

**Vivos Voco**

Joan Szymko

# Vox Grata Women's Choir

## Soprano 1

Kristin Bennett  
Catherine Birdsong Broyles  
Jennifer Haendel  
Susan Kelly  
Jennifer Peterson Morley  
Emily Neely  
Emily Packard  
Leigh Sutherland  
Sharon Warfield

## Soprano 2

Jj Ebelhar  
Katy Ferrell  
Anna Horne  
Kaitlyn Lassiter  
Diana Neely  
Ariel Reid  
Erica Scaramuzza  
Haley Smith  
Jenny Thomas

## Alto 1

Jennifer Barnes  
Julie Birdsong  
Kelly Christie  
Colleen Halfmann  
Shellie Handelsman  
Jane-Coleman Harbison  
Jane Kirchner  
Amory Scott

## Alto 2

Carol Callaway-Lane  
Madaline Garcia  
Denise Linn  
Erin Pearson  
Mareike Sattler

## Collaborative Musicians

John Semingson, Piano and Organ  
Paula Bressman, Harp  
WeiTsun Chang, Violin  
Seanid Chang, Viola  
Justin Maitlen, Crotales  
Harvard Handbell Choir of Westminster Presbyterian Church

*This evening's concert is made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor.  
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We invite you to contact us to learn how you can partner with us!*

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

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 singer, pianist, and conductor, Mrs. MacCallum has also directed choirs at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University, as well as at Westminster Presbyterian Church in Nashville. She is President-Elect for Tennessee ACDA and also serves as chair for Women's Choir Repertoire and Standards. Additionally, Mrs. MacCallum is a former Treasurer and President of the Middle Tennessee Vocal Association. She is 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).

**Tina Milhorn Stallard**, praised for her "gorgeous and colorful soprano" (American Record Guide) has performed solos in works such as Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Haydn's *The Creation*, Bach's *St. John Passion*, Poulenc's *Gloria* and Handel's *Messiah*. In June, 2011, she made her Lincoln Center debut as soprano soloist in Timothy Powell's *Incarnation Mysteria*. She has also performed with the Zagreb Chamber Orchestra, Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra, Johnson City Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, South Carolina Philharmonic Orchestra, Bowling Green Western Symphony, and the University of Arkansas Orchestra.

Stallard is featured in the recordings of Robert Bradshaw's chamber operas, *Gabriel* and *Plastic: The Death of Beauty* (Beauport Classical). Other opera credits include roles in *Così fan tutte*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Little Women*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Crucible*, and the Italian premiere of *Casanova's Homecoming*. She has sung with Opera Omaha, Central City Opera, Opera Theatre of Lucca (Italy), Cincinnati Opera, Kentucky Opera, and The Palmetto Opera. As a concert artist, Stallard has performed in Austria, Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, New York, Indiana, Texas, and throughout the Southeast. Stallard premiered Lori Laitman's song cycle *The Perfected Life* at the 2008 College Music Society National Conference. Later that year, she premiered *Songs of Time and Tide*, a cycle of songs written for her by composer John Fitz Rogers.

Stallard won the Annemarie Gertz Prize in the national finals of The Artist Award Auditions of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, was district winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, semi-finalist of the Eleanor McCollum Competition sponsored by Houston Grand Opera, and winner of the Grace Moore Vocal Competition. She holds the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and is an alumnus of the University of Kentucky (Haggin Fellow) and Belmont University (Presser Scholar). Tina joined the faculty of the University of South Carolina in 2004. She is currently an Associate Professor of Voice and Director of Carolina Music Studios.

**John Semington**, Accompanist for Vox Grata Women's Choir, has served as the Director of Music Ministries for Westminster Presbyterian Church, Nashville, since 2001. He oversees a multi-faceted music program of nine choirs involving nearly 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. Over the past 26 years, he has conducted and/or served as an accompanist for church, community, university and honor choirs in Illinois, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee.

# Texts and Translations

## **Missa brevis in tempore violentiae** [Sung in Greek and Latin]

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to all those of good will. We praise Thee. We bless Thee. We glorify Thee. We give thanks to Thee according to Thy great glory, Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father almighty, Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son, for Thou alone art holy. Thou alone art the Lord. Thou alone art the most high Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## **Psalm 137** [Sung in German]

At the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept, when we thought of Zion. We hung up our harps in the willow trees that were standing in them, because those who held us captive commanded us to sing and to be joyful in our distress: you, sing us one of Zions' songs! How could we sing the song of the Lord in a foreign land? Jerusalem! If I forget you, I might as well forget my right hand! My tongue shall wither if I were to forget you. (Psalm 137:1-4)

## **Reflections from Yad Vashem**

Darkness covered the surface of the deep... (Genesis 1:2)

*Israel Ofreht, Nelya Kolos, Ytzkhak Faierman, Zuzya Cohen, Tommy Kolmar, Sarah Fleischmann, Claude Naxara, Ninnon Beja.*

Gently perplexing descent into darkness, Cavernous spiral and fragmented void, Floating and falling in rapt contemplation, Fathomless chasm of pure life destroyed.

*Maya Synayskaya, Zhenya Zaslavskaya, Alla Verkhovskaya, Franya Waldliferant, Emiliya Morgovskaya, Edith Spiegel, Rabel Lamm, Sonya Svetnikov.*

As the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore... (Genesis 22:17)

*Marcel Fleischner, Zina Dwyer, Rosetta Scheffer, Salomon Ramer, Hende Bittman, Asya Schterengas, Judith Salzer, Fira Skylar, Isaak Tridman.*

Dapples and dustings of luminous starlight, Astral projections of souls now released, Beacons of burnished fire ever reflected, Essence of innocence kindly bequeathed.

*Syoma Tabarinski, Dotia Tatiyevski, Zhenya Bolotyanski, Lyova Levandovski, Sofya Ildarova, Lulush Pinkert, Raya Britva, Bella Ostrinskaya.*

Adonai Ro'i lo echsar (The Lord is my Shepherd)...

Be thou the mother of thousands of millions... (Genesis 24:60)

Pristine oblivion of wind-whispered names and candle flame, Infinite space and the faces of children by mercy reclaimed.

*Sofya Ildarova, Numi, numi, nim (Sleep, sleep), Bella Ostrinskaya, Lyova Levandovski, Raya Britva, Numi, numi, nim.*

## **Miserere** [Sung in Latin]

Have mercy on me, O my Lord, for I have called out to you all the day. For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon you. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am needy and poor. (Psalm 86:1-7)

## **Et misericordia** [Sung in Latin]

And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. (Luke 1:50)

## **The Peace of Wild Things (Wendell Berry)**

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

### **A Prayer for Peace (Thich Nhat Hanh)**

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.

### **Vivos Voco (Medieval virtues and Julian of Norwich)**

[Sung in Latin]

I call the living  
I cry for the dying  
I wail for the dead  
I console the living  
I disperse the winds  
I drive away the overcast of the sky  
All shall be well!  
And all shall be well!  
And all manner of thing shall be well!

## **Program Notes**

### **Missa brevis in tempore violentiae (Short mass in a violent time)**

Ron Jeffers

Ron Jeffers is an American composer and music publisher who resides in Corvallis, Oregon. This short mass, containing only the *Kyrie* and *Gloria* was composed in 1995 for ELEKTRA of British Columbia. The *Kyrie*, with its sharp dissonances and forte dynamics, is a cry for mercy unlike most settings of this ancient text. The more joyful and exuberant *Gloria* offers a contrasting tempo, texture and character to the *Kyrie*.

### **Psalm 137: “An den Wassern zu Babylon”**

Franz Liszt

Of the five psalms that Franz Liszt composed, his setting of the lamentation of the Jews at Babel is the most atmospheric. Markings like *sehr duster und ausdrucksvoll* (very somber and full of expression) for the violin or *weinend, aus tiefster Seele* (from the very depths of the soul) for the singing voice point to the decidedly expressive retracing of the text. Lina Ramann, Liszt's first biographer, reports that inspiration for the setting of this psalm came to the composer while he was looking at Eduard Bendemann's painting “The Lamenting Jews by the Waters of Babylon”.

Of the nine verses of the psalm, Liszt wrote music for only the first five. He divided the work by the motives of the poem. Verses 1 to 3 represent the lamenting of the captives with the last words of verse 3, “Des Zions Lieder singet uns doch eins!” (Sing us one of the songs of Zion) set off in a short, stirring recitative. Verse 4 picks up the opening lament again and, with the cry “Jerusalem”, leads into the solemn closing chorus. The musical development is given essentially to the singing voice that performs the expression-charged words in an improvisatory and declamatory manner, accompanied by thematic anticipations and repetitions

from the solo violin. The organ and harp make the latent harmonies of the soprano and violin take shape in arpeggios, the harp being expressly addressed in the text. Aside from the choir's jubilant cry "Jerusalem", the voices and instruments remain in quiet dynamic ranges and lend feelings of sadness and forsakenness to this psalm. (Notes by Willi Schulze)

### **Reflections from Yad Vashem**

Daniel J. Hall

This gentle, ethereal work is a musical and poetical response to the poignant and lingering impressions evoked by the composer's visit to the Yad Vashem Children's memorial in Jerusalem. The text is a combination of scripture from Genesis, selected children's names from the actual Yad Vashem database, some original verses, the Adonai Roi (or 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm) set in Hebrew and a liberal treatment of the Hebrew lullaby, *Numi, Numi, Yaldati* or Sleep, Sleep, My Little Girl.

The intent of the verses from Genesis is juxtaposed with the composer's own personal aims as he strived to describe various aspects of the experience. The text from Genesis 1:2 is a reference not only to the primordial formlessness of pre-creation, but also a likening of this darkness to the disorienting shadow experienced upon entering the memorial. The text from Genesis 22:17 is a reference to the covenant in which Abraham is promised that his posterity would be as the "stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore" – also, a direct corollary to the children whose names are listed in the Yad Vashem records, and invoked in this music. The composer states: "In my mind, they are represented as stars burning in the darkness of the void." The text from Genesis 24:60 is included to pay homage not only to the mothers of the victims, but to all mothers and motherhood itself as a divine calling and election.

Following each verse are the composer's own words of physical and spiritual description. Their purpose is to invoke not only a literal image of the memorial, but a cosmic spirituality and serenity. They should not be seen as dogma but as simple, contemplative musings of a composer moved by the beauty of the location and symbolism.

The composition reaches its architectural and spiritual climax in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm. (Notes by the publisher)

### **Miserere**

Eva Ugalde

Eva Ugalde, born in 1972, is active as a singer and composer in Spain. She was born in San Sebastian, where she later went on to study Musical Composition and Choir Direction with Gotzon Aulestia and Miguel Amantegi, respectively. Her work is principally centered on choral music, and she has written several pieces for women's choirs. She is a member of a women's choir conducted by Javier Busto. "Miserere" was written in dedication to the victims of war. The piece was chosen as a compulsory work for the 2006 Tolosa choral competition.

### **Et misericordia (from *Magnificat*)**

Kim André Arnesen

Kim André Arnesen (born 1980) was reared in Trondheim, Norway where he studied piano and sang in the Nidaros Cathedral Boys' Choir. He began composing music as a chorister in the boy choir and his music has since been performed by choirs around the world. His first large scale work, the *Magnificat*, was commissioned by the Nidaros Cathedral Girls' Choir and led to a number of other commissions. According to an April 2015 review in "Gramophone" magazine, the work "overflows with warmly compassionate music, which positively glows with its soaring, beautifully arched melodic lines". The composer created this *Magnificat* to proclaim one of the Bible's greatest wonders: the angel Gabriel visiting Mary. It portrays the wonder, devotion, gratitude, joy, humility, hope, and compassion that Mary may have felt. (Notes by the publisher)

### **The Peace of Wild Things**

Joan Szymko

Joan Szymko (born 1957), in addition to being an active composer, has directed choirs in the Pacific Northwest for over twenty-five years. Abundant lyricism, rhythmic integrity, and vigorous attention to text are hallmarks of her diverse and distinctive choral writing. Especially noteworthy is Szymko's significant contribution to the body of literature for women's voices. Her music provides opportunities for women's choruses to stretch beyond the ordinary and the expected, to the refreshing and powerful. In 2010, Szymko was selected as the composer of the Raymond W. Brock Commission by the American Choral Directors Association.

Her setting of Kentucky-based poet Wendell Berry's poem is "dedicated to the welfare of all beings". (Notes by the publisher)

### **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. (Notes by the publisher)

## Vivos Voco

Joan Szymko

In 1342, on her death bed at the age of thirty, Julian of Norwich suddenly recovered and received a series of visions on the passion of Christ. She wrote them down and spent the next twenty years contemplating their meaning while living as a hermit. The fruits of her meditation resulted in a longer text, *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love*, the first book known to be written in English by a woman. It has had a lasting impact to this day, as it stresses the power of love – that everything is held in being by the love of God, therefore “all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

*Virtutes*, literally, “moral virtues,” is the name given to the short statements inscribed (primarily in Latin) on church tower bells in medieval times. Blessed and often baptized, church bells were regarded as somewhat semi-divine beings with distinct personalities (hence the first person statements, i.e. “I call the living”). Bells rang outward, chasing away the evil spirits that were believed to hover over the rooftops, and upward, as prayers to the heavens. Not only were church bells rung to ward off evil spirits, but to protect the faithful from storms, fires, human enemies, and disease.

Szymko was commissioned to write a new work for the San Francisco Girls’ Chorus based upon this text. While composing the piece in 2004, a deadly tsunami hit Southeast Asia. The composer recalls her thoughts at the time: “I was struck by what I kept hearing on the news – that there were no warning systems in place. This was on my mind as I contemplated the times in which Julian of Norwich lived, when church bells were the loudest noise makers known to man. I redirected my efforts, having decided to incorporate bell *virtutes*, reflecting on the need for modern warning systems – the sounds of bells; upon grief – *mortuos plango*; and on the human need to believe in a loving God despite unimaginable tragedy.” (Notes by the publisher)

## Vox Grata

WOMEN’S CHOIR

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. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, tax-exempt organization.

## Special Thanks

**Vox Grata Board of Directors** – Sallie Bailey, Jennifer Barnes, Kelly Christie, Susan Hassell, Susan Holt, Jane Kirchner, Linda Koon, Doug MacCallum, Jeanette MacCallum, and Franco Scaramuzza

**Mareike Sattler**, Language and diction consultant

**Ian Petty**, Web Design

**Westminster Presbyterian Church**

## Upcoming Performances

**Sunday, January 24, 2016** at 3:00 PM, Westminster Presbyterian, Nashville, TN

Vox Grata and Music City Baroque perform music from the Venetian ospedali

**Monday, May 9, 2016** at 7:30 PM, St. Andrew Lutheran, Franklin, TN

Vox Grata performs for American Guild of Organists with Tom Trenney, Organist

**Thursday, May 19, 2016** at 7:00 PM, Westminster Presbyterian, Nashville, TN

Vox Grata Spring Concert

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