

VOX GRATA

Dorothy Rudd Moore

VOICES FROM THE LIGHT

THU, OCT 23, 2025 | 7:30

St. Vincent De Paul Church, Nashville

SUN, OCT 26, 2025 | 5:00

Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville

Featuring
the W. CRIMM SINGERS

Welcome by Lea Maitlen, Vox Grata Board Chair

Vox Grata Women's Choir

Invitation to Love Marques L. A. Garrett, composer Text by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Come, O Love
Come when the nights are bright with stars
Or come when the moon is mellow;
Come when the sun his golden bars
Drops on the hay-field yellow.
Come in the twilight soft and gray,
Come in the night or in the day,
Come, O love, whene'er you may,
And you are welcome, welcome.

You are sweet, O Love, dear Love,
You are soft as the nesting dove.

Come to my heart and bring it to rest
As the bird flies home to its welcome nest.

Come when my heart is full of grief
Or when my heart is merry;
Come with the falling of the leaf
Or with the redd'ning cherry.
Come when the year's first blossom blows,
Come when the summer gleams and glows,
Come with the winter's drifting snows,
And you are welcome, welcome.

There Is a Place Rosephanye Powell, composer Text adapted from Psalm 85:10

There is a place where truth and mercy will meet.
There is a place where justice and peace shall kiss.
Please, take us to this place
And reveal to us a vision of Shalom

That prevails in our world.
Make us ambassadors of just peace.
Shalom.

Stardust B.E. Boykin, composer Text by Brittny Ray Crowell

If we are only stardust,
Let your names reach to the sky above us
Like petals wafting on a breeze
We lift you up beyond our reach

"Kum Buba Yali, Kum Buba Tambe"
Amen, Amen
We say your names

If we are only stardust
May your blood never be in vain
Like petals wafting on a breeze
We lift you up beyond our reach

Each day we grieve another face
Maybe all this stardust
Will carry us home one day
To a home where we can run
A home where we can pray
A home where we can breathe
To sleep and dream without fear –
Is justice this far away?

We cry your names
For the strength to keep on fighting
With the hope that you are flying

Stardust

The W. Crimm Singers

Resignation Florence B. Price, composer
I Must Tell Jesus Arranged by Mattie L. Robertson
Lift Thine Eyes from “Elijah” Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, composer
Total Praise Richard Smallwood, composer
Day and Night Praise Margaret Pleasant Douroux, composer

A Word from Our Concert Beneficiary, YEAH!
Mariela Moscoso

Voices from the Light Dorothy Rudd Moore, composer
Text by the composer with homage to Arna Bontemps,
Langston Hughes, Maya Angelou, and Countee Cullen

Siren Hightower, soprano soloist
Nicole Simone, alto soloist
Jessica Blackwell and Annaliese Kowert, violin
Betsy Lamb, viola | Sari Reist, cello | Keith Sorrels, oboe

I heard a voice in sleep last night
Before the dawn of day
Whose voice it was I do not know
It spoke to me so soft, so low
I asked him why the caged bird sings
I heard voices whisper in the night
Of southern mansions
With marble steps
And poplars standing still as death
And chains of bondmen
Tinkling in the field
Of roses broken down
I heard a chorus sing last night
I heard a chorus singing
It sang of chariots swinging low
It sang of troubles seen,
Nobody knows.
It sang of steal away
It sang of rivers
Of all who have known rivers
Of souls grown deep as the rivers
I wonder why the caged bird sings
I heard voices in the night
Before the dawn of day

They told me about their dream
Of a land across the sea
Of someplace in the sun
To dance and whirl!
Then rest, when the white day is done.
I heard a voice in sleep last night
Just at the break of day
It spoke so sweet, so soft
In tenderness it told of dreams
Enwrapped in silken cloth
And laid in a box of gold
I heard voices in the night
Then came the dawn
The night was gone
Yet with the dawn
Voices I heard in the night
Spoke to me at break of day
As the light came down
I heard a voice from far away
Don't be afraid my child
We came to you in sleep last night
We bards from long ago
Our lips once touched that sacred fire
That bid us sing our song

We spoke to you last night
From far away
And yet so near to you
Don't be afraid my child
We are the scribes
We are the griots
We are the storytellers
We are witnesses
We know why the caged bird sings
Don't be afraid my child
We came to you in sleep last night
We spoke to you
From someplace far away
And yet so near to you
The voices in your sleep last night
Were voices from the Light
We are the voices from the Light
At dawn I dreamed
Of someplace in the sun
To fling my arms wide and dance
I know why the caged bird sings
And spreads its wings for flight
I know why the caged bird sings
I heard voices from the Light.

Program Notes

INVITATION TO LOVE

Marques L. A. Garrett's gorgeous setting echoes the beauty of the poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar. With the flowing, complementary piano part, each of the voice parts is highlighted, creating a beautiful composition that is as satisfying to sing as to hear. The composition begins with an a cappella invitation, repeating the invitation to "come," which is then repeated throughout the poem. Through lush harmonic language, interesting changes of texture, and a small aleatoric section, Garrett has composed a setting that reflects both the beauty and the depth of Dunbar's text. Dunbar (1872-1906) became the first African American poet to earn national distinction and acceptance.

– Dr. Janet Galván
Director of Choral Activities, Ithaca College

THERE IS A PLACE

This gorgeous anthem by Rosephanye Powell is a prayer for peace and justice based on Psalm 85:10. Its melodies and subtle harmonic hues ultimately reveal a mandate — that just peace, truth and mercy depend upon humanity as its ambassadors.

STARDUST

In B.E. Boykin's Stardust, the singers call for "a home where we can run" (in memory of Ahmaud Arbery), "a home where we can pray" (in memory of the victims of the Mother Emanuel shooting), "a home where we can breathe" (in memory of George Floyd) and a home "to sleep and dream without fear" (in memory of Breonna Taylor). In the words of Marcus J. Jauregui, "it is [our] prayer that this piece stirs all who hear it to call for justice for the people of color taken from this world before their time and without concern for their humanity."

The words "Kum Buba Yali, Kum Buba Tambe" have no real translation. They are taken from Virginia Hamilton's "The People Could Fly" and may have been Hamilton's way of showing how most of the Africans lost access to their ability to fly due to being enslaved and removed from their culture.

DOROTHY RUDD MOORE VOICES FROM THE LIGHT

Dorothy Rudd Moore (1940-2022), most well-known for her opera Frederick Douglass, also wrote song cycles,

chamber pieces, and orchestral music. Born in Wilmington, Delaware, her mother was a singer who started her on piano lessons at a young age. Her high-school teacher not only taught her music theory, but also taught her clarinet so that she could integrate the all-male Howard High School band. Moore earned a degree in Composition from Howard University and then received a Lucy Moten Fellowship for study at the American Conservatory at Fontainebleau, France where she took private composition lessons with Nadia Boulanger.

Upon return from France, she lived in NYC where she studied with Chou Wen-Chung who was a student of Edgard Varèse. While primarily a composer, she was also a music educator, teaching at NYU, Bronx Community College and the Harlem School of the Arts. Moore married Kermit Moore, a cellist, composer, and conductor. Both were co-



founders of Society of Black Composers, an organization which existed from 1968-1973 for the advancement and exposure of Black composers. The piece *Voices from the Light*, was premiered by the Girls Choir of Harlem in 1997 at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center. The piece was not heard again until 2022 and has only been performed five times in its history. Masterfully linking quotes from leading African American poets and Negro Spirituals amidst the tapestry of Moore's own text and music, this piece deserves its rightful space in the choral canon.

Dorothy Rudd Moore created her own text for this work with inspiration from Arna Bontemps, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen. She also incorporated the words of the Negro spirituals "Steal Away," "Deep River," "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" as a reference to the ancestral griots of the enslaved Africans. We experience the pain and hurt of the protagonist, first hearing a soft voice in their sleep then through whispers followed by a full chorus. While the new day awakens them, they still hear from those "bards long ago" talking about the hope of a joyful life—one of freedom and dancing.

The music in *Voices from the Light* weaves a narrative as vivid and poignant as the text itself. In some instances, Moore overtly echoes the text, as found in the "tinkling" of the bondmen's chains, rhythmic homages to the quoted

Negro spirituals, and the recurring motif of the caged bird singing, as illustrated in the musical phrase below.



And while always keeping the voice leading singable, Moore explores a variety of tonal areas, many far-removed

from the recurring home key of d minor. Reaping expansive landscapes from the smallest of musical seeds, the piece unfolds with fluid grace while suspending the listener in a dream-like reverie.

And while the triumphant movement from minor to Major elicits joy, that final chord is underscored with bass instruments playing the “Deep River” motif; the bird remains caged and there is still work to do.

– Dr. Brian Russell and
Dr. Marques L. A. Garrett

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Jessebeth Germany, 25/26 Conducting Apprentice
John Semingson, Accompanist

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Patrick Dailey, Founder/Musical Director

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Nicole Allen	Sara Cooper	Isabella Hord	Raynor Murphy	Suzanne Stiles
Jan Allison	Alice Corso	Sydney Johnson	Diana Neely	Beth Thorneycroft
Bailey Anderson	Amanda Craft	Maggie Jones	Kathryn Nobbe	Deborah Torgersen-Paul
Elaine Bailey	Caitlin DiMare-Oliver	Alyson Krokosky	Anne Osborne	Beverly Touchton
Hannah Baisley	Hannah Elliott	Evy Litchford	Lisa Pellegrin	Erica White
Cathy Barker	Lily Ewing	Katelyn Lover	Alex Renna	Becky Yates
Savannah Bensing	Scarlett Gooch	Kyla Mahaffey	Chloe Richard	
Lauren Brennan	Kimberley Hamilton	Kathryn Martin	Mareike Sattler	
Brittany Carnegis	Megan Hawkins	Amanda Max	Sandra Shepherd	

W. CRIMM SINGERS

Christina DeV Vaughn*	Nicole Simone*	Kristen Jones	Cedric Townsend	Jorian Johnson
Siren Hightower*	Stacy Subero*	Zacarra Heath	Emanuelle Brunson	David Thomas
Tyler Samuel*	Lalena Young*	Kenton Smith	Dominic Davidson	

* also singing “Voices from the Light”

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VOX GRATA

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Father Francis Appreh, L.B. Gaiters, and Aaron Shelton of St. Vincent de Paul Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church for the use of rehearsal space

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GIVE VOICE TO WOMEN IN SONG!

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