

The Colorado College Music Department presents

Chamber Chorus

Deborah Jenkins Teske, *director*

Daniel Brink, *piano*

Voice & Verse

Friday, April 25, 2025

7:00 PM

Packard Hall

PROGRAM

I.

The Seal Lullaby

Eric Whitacre

(b. 1970)

Poem by Rudyard Kipling
(1865-1936)

Oh! Hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us
And black are the waters that sparkled so green
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us
At rest in the hollows that rustle between

Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow
Oh weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!

Animal Crackers

Eric Whitacre

Poems by Ogden Nach
(1902-1971)

- I. *The Panther*
- II. *The Cow*
- III. *The Firefly*

One Boy Told Me

Tim Takach

(b. 1978)

Poem: Naomi Shihab Nye
(b. 1952)

Simon Jacobs, *peanut solo*

II.

Hymn to St. Cecilia

Benjamin Britten

(1913-1976)

Poem by W.H. Auden
(1907-1973)

Ava Piebenga, *soprano*

Natalie Caputo, *soprano*

Phoebe Gordon, *alto*

Eric Ou, *tenor*

Jim Sena, *bass*

I.

In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:
And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their pain.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

II.

I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.

I shall never be Different.
Love me.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

III.

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the stain.
O law drummed out by hearts against the still
Long winter of our intellectual will.
That what has been may never be again.
O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.
O bless the freedom that you never chose.
O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.
O wear your tribulation like a rose.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

III.

Sure on this Shining Night

Samual Barber
(1910-1981)
Poem by James Agee
(1909-1955)

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

The Peace of Wild Things

Jake Runestad
(b. 1986)
Poem by Wendell Berry
(b. 1934)

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 and 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.

All the Way Home

Sarah Quartel
(b. 1982)



COLORADO COLLEGE CHAMBER CHORUS

Soprano

Natalie Caputo '27
Grace Casson '25
Shanti Harrison '28
*Alyssa Koogler
Ava Piebenga '25
Xinran Wang '25
Molly Widlund '25

Alto

Iyanla Ayite '25
Phoebe Gordon '24
Bella Houck '27
*Samantha Morrison
Grace Thum '28

Tenor

Sai Caster '28
*Simon Jacobs
Eric Ou '28
Damion Scott '26
Anders Ripley '25
*Todd Teske

Bass

*Jim Sena
David Sigman '27

*Section Leaders



PROGRAM NOTES

Hymn to St. Cecilia

Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten was a central figure of 20th-century British classical music, with a range of works including opera, choral works, orchestral and chamber pieces. He was born on St. Cecilia's Day, 22 November 1913 in Suffolk, England. W.H. Auden, a poet, author and playwright, was a major literary figure of the same time. Born in York, England in 1907, he later moved to America. Britten was also in the US from 1939-1942 and during this time he and Auden became collaborators and developed a complicated friendship. Auden eventually came to be critical of Britten for avoiding risks, both in his personal life and as an artist. These tensions came to a head in 1942, when Auden wrote a letter which criticized Britten for being too reserved and intellectual in his approach to art and accused him of “denial and evasion of the demands of disorder.” Britten disagreed, believing that carefully chosen discipline was his only possible course.

Britten had begun work on *Hymn to St. Cecilia* before setting sail to return to England in 1942. At the beginning of the voyage the manuscript was confiscated, forcing him to start over from scratch. But by the time he got to England the entire piece was done. The work is constructed in 3 parts, with a refrain addressed to St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music, after each section. The dominant theme presented deals with the corruption of innocence, which Auden viewed as essential to art.

Part I portrays music in the person of St. Cecilia, using double entendre to suggest that music is not purely spiritual, but also erotic and powerful. Invoking her intervention as a muse is potentially dangerous.

In Part II music itself speaks in the first person with a child's voice, saying, “I cannot grow...I only play.” Auden certainly saw Britten in this light. The music is composed in a canon (a round), with the parts chasing each other, like a game of tag. While childlike, this music is also intellectually contrived and consciously avoids emotional connection. The text “I am defeat” suggests that remaining at such a level of extreme naiveté leads to a dead end.

Part III is the most poetically and musically complex. In the first of three stanzas, the bass section sings an ostinato, while the upper voices struggle against it. Here music is called upon to rearrange our lives. The second stanza features a serenely beautiful soprano solo depicting music as children playing among “the ruined languages” of civilization's failures. There is an aching sadness and melancholy in this part of Britten's setting. The mood is broken in the third stanza by the return of the bass ostinato. Here Auden is speaking directly to Britten. The inner struggle between reason and passion can be heard in the choir, while soloists interject with exhortations to accept the loss of innocence, and even to find freedom in it. The solo parts represent specific instruments, each with a personality and an individual voice. The alto - violin; the bass - timpani; the soprano - flute; and the tenor - trumpet. Britten's musical setting here is joyous, perhaps indicating that he understood Auden's message. The loss of innocence should be seen not as a tragedy, but as cause for celebration.



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Colorado College is located within the unceded territory of the Ute Peoples. The earliest documented peoples also include the Apache, Arapaho, Comanche, and Cheyenne. An extended list of tribes with a legacy of occupation in Colorado can be accessed through the Music Department website.

