



The 127th Annual

Concert of Sacred Music

Memorial Chapel

Northfield, Massachusetts

Sunday, May 1, 2022, 2:30 PM

“In the music the village never ends.”
(From the song “Common Ground”)

When we began choosing repertoire for this year’s Sacred Concert, we were feeling optimistic and grateful. The pandemic seemed to be waning, and we were excited to think about performing this concert in person, inviting our alumni back to perform with us, and having the whole school participate. We focused on finding music that encompasses the themes of love, joy, singing, and gratitude. After two long years, we are grateful to be finding our way back to community, here at Northfield Mount Hermon and in the world. There have been difficult moments, yet here we are, together, celebrating a 127-year-old school tradition. How many high schools can boast a musical tradition that is this old?

In our program, you will hear music of joy that invites us to sing. You will hear grandiose music that explodes with power and lifts up our spirits. You will hear contemplative music that inspires a sense of quiet gratitude. There is music from the Philippines, Brazil, England, Germany, and America that celebrates aspects of being together in community. There is music about the power of love that will not let us go.

Our program was set in early February. Then, on Feb. 24, Russia invaded Ukraine. To present a program that does not acknowledge the suffering of the Ukrainian people (two of whom are students here) did not seem appropriate. The program begins with the “Prayer for Ukraine” and closes with Vaughan Williams’ “Dona Nobis Pacem (Give Us Peace).” We include these pieces to show our solidarity with Ukraine.

Music has been, since humans began living together in groups, a unifying element that helps to create and sustain community. Singing is a vehicle for sharing our sorrows, inspiring change, and celebrating our commonalities. We are the singing school. What a gift it is to be in a place that is finding its way back to community. We present our program today with a profound sense of gratitude. It is true: In the music, the village never ends.

Program

Prayer for Ukraine

Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912)

Poem by Oleksandr Konysky (1836–1900)

Lord, oh the Great and Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Bless her with freedom and light
Of your holy rays.

With learning and knowledge enlighten
Us, your children small,
In love pure and everlasting
Let us, oh Lord, grow.

We pray, oh Lord Almighty,
Protect our beloved Ukraine,
Grant our people and country
All your kindness and grace.

Bless us with freedom, bless us with wisdom,
Guide into kind world,
Bless us, oh Lord, with good fortune
Forever and evermore.

Literary translation by Dmytro Shostak

The “Prayer for Ukraine,” first published in 1885, has become a spiritual anthem for the country. The composer, Mykola Lysenki, and the author of the poem, Oleksandr Konysky, intended for the song to be sung by children’s choirs, but it found its way into the Christian churches of Ukraine. During the Ukrainian War of Independence (1917–1920), it was performed by thousands of mass choirs in Kyiv. Throughout the world churches and musical organizations are singing this prayer for peace in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We sing it today to show our school’s solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Sofia Tiapkina ’24 and Bohdan Karavan ’22, readers

THE CONCERT CHOIR, THE ALUMNI CHOIR,
THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE CONCERT BAND

Final Movement: *And Then Shall Your Light Break Forth*
from **Elijah**

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)

Mendelssohn composed the biblical oratorio “Elijah” in 1845 for the Birmingham, England, Music Festival. It premiered there in August of 1846 and was immediately proclaimed a great work of art. The oratorio tells the story of the prophet Elijah, based on material from the Old Testament, specifically the Book of Kings, as well as some material from Psalms. Elijah’s story is one of persecution and endurance. He fought to get his people to stop worshipping false idols (such as Baal) and worship God instead. He was an important prophet to Muslims, Catholics, Jews, and Orthodox Christians and was named the patron saint of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1752. The final chorus that you hear today takes place after Elijah has triumphantly ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire. The piece ends with a jubilant fugue, a musical texture in which a theme is heard throughout all the voices and instruments, creating a rich tapestry of imitation and layers of melodies.

THE CONCERT CHOIR, THE ALUMNI CHOIR,
THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, AND THE CONCERT BAND

Prelude, the 49th Parallel

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

This lovely short composition is an excerpt from the film score that Ralph Vaughan Williams wrote for the movie “49th Parallel.” The movie is set in the early days of World War II, when a soldier crossed the 49th parallel, from Canada into the northwestern United States. “49th Parallel” is performed in agreement with Boosey & Hawkes Rental Library.

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

O Love

Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)

Poem by George Matheson (1842–1906)

Elaine Hagenberg is one of America’s preeminent composers of choral music. Her music is heard throughout the world and has been featured in many of the most prestigious music festivals. Her composition “I Am the Wind” was the 2020 winner of the American Choral Directors Association Brock Competition for Professional Composers. Hagenberg is also a pianist and conductor. Her music is known for its beautiful melodies and for how well she composes for the voice. Both are in clear evidence in this poignant setting of the poem by George Matheson.

Teresa Chang ’22, cello, and Craig Sandford, piano

THE SELECT WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE

Flight

Kim André Arnesen (b. 1980)

Poem by Euan Tait (b. 1968)

All we are, we have found in song;
you have drawn this song from us.
Songs of lives unfolding
Fly overhead, cry overhead:
longing, rising from the song within.

Moving like the rise and fall of wings,
hands that shape our calling voice
on the edge of answers
you've heard our cry, you've known our cry:
music's fierce compassion flows from you.

The night is restless with the sounds we hear
is broken, shaken by the cries of pain:
for this is music's inner voice,
saying, yes, we hear you,
all you who cry aloud,
and we will fly, answering you:
so our lives sing, sing,
wild we will fly,
wild in spirit we will fly.

Like a feather falling from the wing,
fragile as a human voice,
afraid, uncertain,
alive to love, we sing as love,
afraid, uncertain,
yet our flight begins as song.

“Flight” was composed in 2014 for the St. Olaf Choir, under the direction of Anton Armstrong. Kim André Arnesen had worked with the choir and Armstrong for a previous commission and had been impressed with their devotion to making music collaboratively. Arnesen wanted to compose a piece that would reflect their commitment to and joy in singing together. He asked Euan Tait, a Welsh-Scottish poet and librettist, to write a poem that he could set to music. Tait wrote this about his poem: “I live in a house that overlooks two great British rivers, the Wye and the Severn, and the air is constantly alive with the sound of seabird wings and calls, so when Kim André Arnesen came to me with the idea of writing a piece for these amazing young musicians, the idea of flight as a metaphor for the beginning of a young adult life — and as a tribute to a great conductor — came to me first. A human life preparing to take off, and the movements of a conductor’s arm like the beating of a soul’s great wings, are images at the heart of this piece.” Arnesen has masterfully captured the essence of Tait’s poem in his musical setting. Listen closely to the melodies and you will hear the soaring flight of birds, the

flapping of their wings, the quiet when they touch down on earth, and the joy of being in community with others. When this piece was premiered by the St. Olaf Choir, the bass section included a graduate of Northfield Mount Hermon, David Anderson '11, who has returned to sing in the Alumni Choir today!

THE NMH SINGERS

The Peace of Wild Things, *World Premiere*

Craig K. Sanford (b. 1981)

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,
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.

Craig Sanford's setting of this iconic poem, composed during his sabbatical in 2019, captures the simplicity and intricacies of Wendell Berry's words with his gorgeous music. Sanford's compositional genius lies in his ability to set words with music that enhances their meaning. His harmonic language fuses major, minor, and modal scales. In this piece, particularly, there are stark, open chords that underscore the text as well as lush, full harmonies that paint the beauty of nature. For example, the cadence at "and my children's lives may be" ends on an unsettling open chord, leaving the listener aware of Berry's and, perhaps, Sanford's fears about the future. In the passages of the poem that describe nature and her animals, Sanford uses rich, slightly dissonant chords that complement the sense of beauty that Berry describes. The word "grief," in the eighth line, is set with the most dissonant, tense harmony of the piece. He even manages to slip in a bit of jazz harmony in the second iteration of "still water," the only time that Sanford repeats words from the poem. Sanford's compositions are always in service to the texts he sets, with his lyrical melodies and beautiful harmonic language; singers love to learn and perform his music. It is an honor to present the world premiere of this piece, which is done in deep gratitude and appreciation for the thousands of hours we have spent working together.

THE ALUMNI CHOIR

Firebird Suite: Berceuse and Finale

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)
Arranged by Merle Isaac (1898–1996)

In the years between 1910 and 1913, the young Igor Stravinsky roared onto the international scene, composing three groundbreaking ballets for Sergei Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes: “The Firebird,” “Petrushka,” and “The Rite of Spring.” This excerpt presents “The Firebird”’s lullaby (Berceuse) and the triumphant finale of the Firebird and Prince Ivan’s victory over Kashchei’s dark magic.

THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE CONCERT BAND**Alleluia**

Randall Thompson (1899–1984)

This performance of the “Alleluia” is dedicated to Hugh Silbaugh, our teacher, colleague, and friend, who loved to sing and was a shining presence in his classroom, on the playing fields, in the woods, in the dining hall, in the bass section for Sacred Concert and Vespers, and in our hearts. We miss you.

Randall Thompson remains one of the most revered of American choral composers. His gift of capturing the prosody of a text in his compositions is unsurpassed. Thompson, who was born in New York in 1899, was a “fac brat” at Lawrenceville, where his father was an English teacher. Thompson went to Lawrenceville, then pursued his musical studies at Harvard and Eastman School of Music. In 1940, Thompson was asked by Sergei Koussevitsky, the conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and founder of the Berkshire Music Center (now known as Tanglewood), to write a choral composition for the opening of the center. Koussevitsky wanted a brass fanfare. Thompson was deeply troubled by the recent fall of France to the Nazis and did not feel a fanfare was appropriate. Instead, he composed this a cappella piece, using a two-word text: “Alleluia, Amen.” Most “Alleluias” are celebratory, employing a fast tempo; this one is slow and contemplative. Of his piece, Randall Thompson wrote, “I think that in all good music, all good art, the best things transcend tears and express something that is built out of sadness, but rises through spiritual elevation to truth, beauty and love.” This setting of a single repeated word takes us on a journey through many human emotions: devotion, despair, anxiety, hope, anguish, joy, to peace in the final amen. The piece premiered on July 8, 1940. The student choir and their conductor received the printed score that day and had only one hour to learn it before the performance.

THE ALUMNI CHOIR AND THE CONCERT CHOIR**Common Ground**

Ivan Lins, Ronaldo Monteiro de Souza

English lyrics by Paul Winter, John Guth, Michael Holmes

Voices are calling round the earth,
Music is rising in the sea
The spirit of morning fills the air,
Guiding my journey home.
Where is the path beyond the forest?

Where is the song I always knew?
I remember it just around the bend,
In the village the music never ends.

In a circle of friends, in a circle of sound,
All our voices will blend when we touch common ground.

Voices are calling round the earth,
Music is rising in the sea
The spirit of morning fills the air,
Guiding my journey home.
Here is the path beyond the forest,
Here is the song I always knew.
I remember it just around the bend,
In the music the village never ends.

In a circle of friends, in a circle of sound,
All our voices will blend when we touch common ground.

“During the summer of 1977, Paul Winter invited an eclectic group of musicians to come to his farm and spend several weeks making an album together, while living in a tent village by the river. ‘Common Ground’ is a Brazilian song that immediately gained the group’s affection and inspired them to write English lyrics which would sum up their experience of ‘the village.’” — From the liner notes of the Paul Winter album “Common Ground” (1978)

THE STUDENT BODY, THE CONCERT CHOIR,
THE ALUMNI CHOIR AND THE JAZZ COMBO

Salmo 150

Ernani Aguiar (b. 1950)

Praise the Lord in his sacred places,
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts,
Praise him according to his excellent greatness,
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet,
Praise him with the psaltery and the harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and the dance,
Praise him with strings and pipes.
Praise him with high sounding cymbals,
Praise him with cymbals of joy.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Ernani Aguiar is a Brazilian composer, musicologist, professor, and choral conductor. His work as a musical historian has introduced the world to Brazilian musical compositions from the 18th century. His own choral works have been performed all over the world. “Salmo 150” is perhaps his most famous. In it, he uses repeated, rapid rhythms and sharp articulations to bring the power and excitement of the text to life.

THE SELECT WOMEN’S ENSEMBLE

Leron, Leron Sinta, Filipino Folk Song

Arranged by Saunder Choi (b.1988)

Leron, Leron my dear,
blossoms of the papaya tree,
with a bamboo basket,
he’d gather some fruits.
But when he reached the top (of the tree),
the branch broke.
Oh, what a trick of fate,
he had to search for another.
Wake up, neneng*,
let’s pick some tamarind fruits.
Take the bamboo baskets,
to put the ripe ones in.
Upon reaching the top (of the tree),
the branches swayed heavily.
Hold on tight, neneng*,
as you might fall.

The one I will love
is a fearless man.
He has seven guns
and nine knives.
The journey he will take
is the distance of a table.
A place of noodles
is his foe!

*neneng is a colloquial term referring to a girl and does not have an adequate English translation.

“Leron, Leron Sinta,” or “My Dear, Little Leron,” is a popular Filipino folk song from the Tagalog region. It is traditionally a work song, representing those who are in the fields harvesting fruits, though the origin is unclear due to the lack of scholarly literature that examines Philippine folk music. Because of its catchy tune, it is often presented as a children’s song, though some parts of the text may have been meant for a more mature audience. Some sources also refer to it as a courtship song.” — Saunder Choi

Saunders Choi is an accomplished Filipino composer who was born in Manila. He received his first degree from De La Salle University-Manila, then went on to study composition and conducting at the Berklee College of Music. In this arrangement, Choi enhances the simple and fun folk song with complicated alternating rhythms. Special thanks to Cecile and Cholin DeLa Cruz for their help with the Filipino language!

THE NMH SINGERS

Tudo Bem

Bob Lipton (b. 1971)

“In Brazil, the phrase ‘tudo bem’ (too-do bane) is used as a common greeting and reply. When answering with ‘tudo bem,’ you are letting people know that ‘everything’s cool.’ It reflects the upbeat nature and joy felt by Brazilians in their everyday life.” — Bob Lipton

THE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA AND THE WORLD MUSIC PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Sing Out My Soul

Marques L.A. Garrett (b. 1984)

Poem by William Henry Davies (1871–1940)

Marques L. A. Garrett, a native of Virginia, is assistant professor of music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a conductor, soloist, and composer whose music has been heard throughout the United States. He is a leading scholar of non-idiomatic choral music of black composers and is currently the scholarship chair of the National Association of Negro Musicians. “Sing Out My Soul” was composed in 2020 and premiered at the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Conference in Rochester, New York, that March. I had the good fortune to be in the audience for that premiere and am delighted for our students to perform his piece.

THE CONCERT CHOIR

Jerusalem

C. Hubert Parry (1848–1918)

Text by William Blake (1757–1827)

Arranged by Joseph T. Elliott Jr. (1929–2017)

The audience is invited to stand and join in the singing of the hymn.

And did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England’s mountain’s green?
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England’s pleasant pastures seen?
And did the countenance divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
ring me my arrow of desire.
Bring me my spear! O clouds unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!
I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In ev'ry green and pleasant land.

Dona Nobis Pacem, Movement V

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Grant us peace.

Ralph Vaughan Williams served in the British army in both Macedonia and France during World War I. His experiences in battle had a major impact on his feelings about nationalism and war. When the world started to become unsettled in the 1930s, as Hitler began his aggression in Europe, Vaughan Williams channeled his emotions in a large, five-movement cantata for orchestra and chorus, which he finished in 1936. In the fifth and final movement, Vaughan Williams turned to the Old Testament for most of this text: "Nation shall not lift up a sword against nations, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4). This movement is a multi-layered tapestry of vocal and orchestral lines weaving through each other until they all jubilantly and loudly proclaim as one: "And on earth peace, good will to all." Vaughan Williams brings the movement to a close with soft, peaceful music and the text "Dona nobis pacem": Grant us peace.

THE CONCERT CHOIR, THE ALUMNI CHOIR,
THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA AND THE CONCERT BAND

Northfield Benediction

Lucy Rider Meyer (1848–1922)

The audience is invited to remain seated and join in the singing of the benediction.

The Lord Bless thee and keep thee,
The Lord make his light shine upon thee,
And be gracious unto thee,
And be gracious unto thee.
The Lord lift up her countenance,
Their countenance upon thee.
And give thee peace, and give thee peace.

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On a personal note, I want to thank my comrades in musical adventures, Steven Bathory-Peeler, Ron Smith, and Craig Sandford. I've lost track of how many programs we have put together, but every one has been a gift. What a joy it has been to work with colleagues who share a deep commitment to students, who believe in excellence, and who also love to laugh! I also want to thank all the students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends who have sung throughout the years, who believed it was worth all the work, and found their way to creating beautiful music and community with each other. Finally, I offer my deepest gratitude to my family, who have shared in my work and who have been my biggest supporters: Wesley Sullivan '01, Kelsey Sullivan '02, Spencer Hattendorf '08, and, always, Bill Hattendorf P '01, '02, '08. I have been asked many times recently how I feel about the work I have done here at NMH all these years. The answer is simple. It has always been about love and gratitude.

—Sheila Heffernon

Sheila L. Heffernon
Director of Choral Music

Ronald Smith
Director of Jazz and World Music

Steven Bathory-Peeler
Director of Orchestral and Band Music

Craig K. Sandford
Accompanist