

Eastman/UR Treble Chorus

Chenxin Han and Brenda Nitsch, *conductors*

Eastman Repertory Singers

Henry Griffin and Jiabao Guo, *conductors*

Sunday, April 13, 2025

Kilbourn Hall

3:30 PM

~ PROGRAM ~

Eastman School of Music / University of Rochester Treble Chorus

Crossing the Bar

Gwyneth Walker

(b. 1947)

5'

La Mia Stella

Ivo Antognini

(b. 1963)

4'

Haniel Anugerah, piano
Brenda Nitsch, conductor

The Look

Jussi Chydenius

(b. 1972)

3'

Haniel Anugerah, piano
Chenzin Han, conductor

Banjo Pickin' Girl

Appalachian Folk Song

arr. Tim Sharp and Andrea Ramsey

3'

Gavin Rice, banjo
Elizabeth Morad, washboard
Zofia Gutierrez, bass
Brenda Nitsch, conductor

~ INTERMISSION ~

Eastman Repertory Singers

Abendfeier in Venedig

Clara Schumann

(1819-1896)

4'

Henry Griffin, conductor



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

~ PERSONNEL ~

Magnificat, RV 610

Magnificat
Et exultavit spiritus meus
Et misericordia
Fecit potentiam
Deposuit potentes de sede
Esurientes implevit bonis
Suscepit Israel
Sicut locutus est
Gloria Patri

Antonio Vivaldi

(1678-1741)
15'

Abigail Liebegott, soprano
Sarah Cao, soprano
Evan Anderson, alto
Evan McMahon, tenor
Elijah Gebers, baritone

Zihua Ma, Claire Chien, Lydia McConkie, violin I
Sedona Ma, Olivia Lieto, violin II
Keon Sagara, Abigail Benzinger, viola
Tyler Brown, Anastasia Wilson, cello
Jiayan Yang, double bass
Nathan Clarke, oboe I
Kate Roberts, oboe II
Jennifer Shin, organ

Henry Griffin, conductor

Fern Hill

John Corigliano

(b. 1938)
18'

Madeleine Christopher, mezzo-soprano

Zihua Ma, Claire Chien, Lydia McConkie, violin I
Sedona Kmen, Olivia Lieto, violin II
Keon Sagara, Abigail Benzinger, viola
Tyler Brown, Anastasia Wilson, cello
Jiayan Yang, double bass
Jennifer Shin, piano
Lindsay Haukom, harp
Jiabao Guo, conductor

Eastman School of Music / University of Rochester Treble Chorus

Brenda Nitsch, *instructor/conductor*
Chenxin Han, *graduate assistant/conductor*
Haniel Anugerah, *accompanist*

Genia Abbey
Evan Anderson
Gabriella Cariddo
Mary Ellen Coleman
Remington Collins
Emmaline Colvin
Julia Dover Crane
Cara Gagliardi

Amelia Harkey
Xinyun Lee
Ruofan Liu
Nina McGarrahan
Sofia Mains
Liliana Mann
Maria Mastrosimone
Amanda Oren

Kimia Peykarzadeh
Eileen Scardino
Natalie Smith
Ava Stern
Lily Sumida
Winnie Wang
Wendy Zeng
Athena Zhu

Eastman Repertory Singers

Jennifer Shin, *rehearsal pianist*

SOPRANO

Evan Anderson
Naomi Chad
Remington Collins
Emmaline Colvin
Abigail Crafton
Julia Drover Crane
Amelia Harkey
Nicole Honchell
Christine Kelly
Mi Li
Yuchen Lyu
Sofia Mains
Liliana Mann
Dorothy Nie
Lily Sumida
Chang Xu
Pengling Zhu

ALTO

Jing Ao
Niyayesh Bagheri
Coco Connor
Lillian Feng
Kasey Gibbons
Claire Hou
Viviane Kim
Xintong Li
Yuki Liu
Ziyao Liu
Susanna Lo
Aya Raji
Shu Wang
Abby Wilson
Samantha Wuo
Yidan Xu
Haoyi Yang
Wanyin Yao
Wendy Zeng
Haoyi Zhang
Jiayu Zhang
Ziyan Wang
Wanyue Zhao

TENOR

Chun Hei Chen
Max Chu
Zhijia He
Tyler Hernandez
Jin Huang
William Li
Kellen Mikesell
Andrew Perricone
Nolan Tu
Shalev Weber
Chengyu Zhang

BASS

Nathan Barcelona
Lizhou Ding
Henry Griffin
Xiongzan Guan
Jiabao Guo
Samuel Han
Hongxi Hu
Nattakon Lertwattanakul
Endong Li
Jon Madden
Nathaniel Peets
Fenglei Wang
Jeremey Wang
Gu Hong Wu
Changning Xu
Chenxi Zhou

~ PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS, AND TRANSLATIONS ~

Crossing the Bar

In Alfred, Lord Tennyson's poem "Crossing the Bar," the journey from life to death is compared to the crossing of a sandbar. The mood of the poem is one of peaceful acceptance along with joyful expectancy. The author anticipates meeting his "pilot" face to face, which we can assume to mean God or a guiding force in the afterlife. Tennyson wrote the poem in 1889, three years before his death. It is believed that "the bar" referenced in the poem was inspired by Salcombe Bar, a sandbar just off the coast of South Devon, across which Tennyson once had a rough passage while aboard a boat owned by historian, J.A. Froude. At the request of Tennyson, "Crossing the Bar" is the last poem in all collections of his work.

- Brenda Nitsch

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home!

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourn of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

La Mia Stella

The sun is shining on a beautiful morning, while I peacefully read the newspaper. A photograph catches my eye of a boat with three hundred Africans on board. I read the caption: unfortunately, many of them will not arrive alive on the shores of Lampedusa, in the Mediterranean Sea. I stare attentively at the picture, and among the many distraught faces one stands out above the rest, a child with wide eyes, hands holding tight on the arms of an adult. I am moved, and I feel a duty to do something for this poor creature. *La mia stella* is dedicated to him and to all those that are forced to flee from their homeland in hopes of finding, after long and frightening journeys, a better life.

- Ivo Antognini

(Swahili)
Nyota yangu

My little star

(Italian)
Guarda la stella disse il mio papà;
Segui la sua luce: lei ti guiderà
In un mondo senza guerre,
Dove tu potrai giocare.
Dai, chiudi gli occhi, bambino mio,
Prova a sognar.

*Look up to that star, my father said.
Follow its light, it will lead you
Into a world without wars,
Where you will be free to play.
Come, close your eyes, my son
See if you can dream.*

Soffro tanto il freddo, disse il mio papà;
Stai attento all'onda: presto tornerà.
Chissà quante notti ancora
Noi dovremo aspettar
Un nuovo mondo, una nuova vita,
Su questa barca in mezzo al mar?

*I am cold, my father said.
Look out for the wave; it will come back.
Who knows how many nights
We will have to wait
For a new world, a new life,
In this boat adrift in the sea.*

Ma la mia stella, lassu nel ciel,
Presto ci manderà un salvatore per tutti noi
E anche per quelli in fondo al mar.

*But my little star up in the sky
Soon will send a saviour for us all,
And for those the sea has taken away.*

Guarda com'è grande, disse il mio papà;
Tieniti piu forte; non ti prenderà
Come ha fatto con la mamma
Che riposa in fondo al mar.
Chiudi la bocca, bambino mio,
Non respirar.

*See how big the wave is, my father said.
Hold on tight, it will not sweep you away
As it did with your mother,
Now asleep on the bottom of the sea.
Do not open your mouth, my son,
Do not breathe.*

Vado dalla mamma, disse il mio papà:
Oramai sei grande: tu rimani qua.
So che non avrai paura
E che presto troverai
Un'altra terra, un altro mondo,
E un'altra vita comincerà!

*I am going to join your mother, father said.
You are a big boy now; you can stay.
I know you won't be afraid
And soon you'll find
Another land, another world,
And another life will begin.*

Ma cosa fai? ma dove sei?
Stellina mia, lassu nel cielo...
Fatti vedere, stellina mia!
Fatti trovare lassu nel cielo.

*But what are you doing? Where are you?
My little star, up in the sky...
Let me see you, my little star,
Let me find you up in the sky.*

Alessandro Carrera

The Look

Finnish composer and vocalist Jussi Chydenius is known for his ability to blend the rich textures of traditional choral writing with the rhythmic vitality and harmonies of pop and jazz. With roots as a drummer in the platinum-selling rock band Don Huonot and international acclaim as the bass singer and composer for the a cappella ensemble Rajaton, Chydenius brings a fresh and accessible voice to contemporary choral music.

In *The Look*, Chydenius sets a playful and poignant poem by Sara Teasdale, capturing its whimsical reflection on past romances. The piece sparkles with rhythmic energy, jazzy piano syncopations, and bright melodic lines that mirror the poem's flirtatious tone. Lush harmonies and shifting textures between voices create a rich sonic landscape, while stylistic vocal ornaments lend a carefree, expressive character. Both charming and musically satisfying, *The Look* is a vibrant example of Chydenius's signature fusion of classical choral tradition and contemporary flair.

- Chenxin Han

Strephon kissed me in the spring, Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me and never kissed at all.

Strephon's kiss was lost in jest, Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes haunts me night and day.

Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)

Banjo Pickin' Girl

Banjo Pickin' Girl, an Appalachian folk song, can be traced back to 16th century mountain banjo songs with the refrain credited to *Baby Mine*, a 1879 pop song. The arrangers in this contemporary setting creatively weave in a nineteenth century African-American spiritual, changing up an otherwise spirited bluegrass vibe.

- Brenda Nitsch

I'm goin' around the world baby mine
I'm goin' around the world baby mine
I'm goin' around the world, I'm a banjo pickin' girl
I'm goin' around the world, baby mine

Well I'm goin' to Arkansas, baby mine
I'm goin' to Arkansas, baby mine
I'm goin' to Arkansas, you stay here with ma and pa,
I'm goin' to Arkansas, baby mine

Well I'm goin' to Tennessee, baby mine
I'm goin' to Tennessee, baby mine
I'm goin' to Tennessee, now don't you follow me
I'm goin' to Tennessee, baby mine

Banjo Pickin' Girl (continued)

Well, I'm goin' to North Carolina, baby mine
I'm goin' to North Carolina, baby mine
I'm goin' to North Carolina, and then I'll go to China

Well, I'm goin' across the ocean, baby mine
I'm goin' across the ocean baby mine
I'm goin' across the ocean unless I change my notion
I'm goin' across the ocean, baby mine

If you ain't got no money, baby mine (nobody knows the trouble I've seen)
If you ain't got no money, baby mine (nobody knows the trouble I've seen)
If you ain't got no money, than find another honey
If you ain't got no money, baby mine.

Well I'm goin' around the world, baby mine
I'm goin' around the world, baby mine
I'm goin' around the world, I'm a Banjo Pickin' girl

I'm goin' around the world
I'm goin' around the world
I'm goin' around the world baby mine

Abendfeier in Venedig

Starting off this half of the concert in Venice (to be continued with the Vivaldi!), Clara Schumann paints a vivid picture of the devout masses of Catholics praying to the Virgin Mary and Jesus outside in Venice. Presumably, it is crepuscular as the sun has just set, casting its “roseate” hue on the clouds — a metaphor of songs from the “blessed spirits.” Listen for the downward contour to the melody initiated by the sopranos which paints this highly evocative text.

- Henry Griffin

Ave Maria! Meer und Himmel ruh'n,
Von allen Türmen hallt der Glocken Ton.

*Ave Maria! Sea and sky are at rest,
Bells ring out from all the towers.*

Ave Maria! Laßt vom ird'schen Tun,
Zur Jungfrau betet, zu der Jungfrau Sohn!

*Ave Maria! Leave all earthly activity,
Pray to the Virgin, to the Virgin's Son!*

Des Himmels Scharen selber knien nun
Mit Liliestäben vor des Vaters Thron,
Und durch die Rosenwolken wehn die Lieder
Der sel'gen Geister feierlich hernieder.

*The angelic throng now is kneeling
With lilies wrapped around their staves,
And through the roseate clouds, the songs
Of blessed spirits float ceremoniously down.*

Emanuel Geibel

Richard Stokes

Magnificat

In 1703, Antonio Vivaldi, at age 25, was ordained as a priest and took over as director of music at Ospedale della Pietà (“Devout Hospital of Mercy”) in Venice. One of four “ospedale grandi” in Venice at the time, the young women at the hospital learned music as a predominant means of spending their days. The most talented among the ranks formed the “figlie di coro” (“daughters of the choir”) and worked directly with Vivaldi, giving weekly public performances. Though Vivaldi continued his working relationship with the Ospedale until 1735, he gained as many detractors as he did admirers. In 1709, the board ousted him from his position by a narrow vote. However, they reinstated him in 1711 after feeling the loss of his musical presence leading the vocal and instrumental forces.

Vivaldi’s *Magnificat*, composed and revised from the early 1720s into the late 1730s, has four widely-accepted versions: RV 610 (which we will hear today), 610a, 610b, and 611. The more virtuosic solo movements would have been sung by the aforementioned all-star soprano voices in the “figlie di coro” group. All four versions employ SATB choir bringing about the questions: Who sang the Tenor and Bass parts at the Ospedale della Pietà? Perhaps the priests or monks? Perhaps the girls themselves played lower-range instruments while the upper choral parts sang the text? Or did some particularly ambitious contralti sing the parts themselves? This is one of the great mysteries still surrounding this piece which we bring to life for you today.

- Henry Griffin

Magnificat anima mea Dominum.

Et exultavit spiritus meus
In Deo, salutari meo.
Quia respexit humilitatem
Ancillae suae:
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me
Dicent omnes generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est
Et sanctum nomen eius.

Et misericordia eius a progenie
In progenies timentibus eum.

Fecit potentiam in brachio suo:
Dispersit superbos
Mente cordis sui.

Deposuit potentes de sede,
Et exaltavit humiles.

Esurientes implevit bonis:
Et divites dimisit inanes.

Suscepit Israel, puerum suum,
Recordatus misericordiae suae.

Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros
Abraham, et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio,
Et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
Et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

*And my spirit hath rejoiced
In God my saviour.
For he hath regarded the lowliness
Of his handmaiden:
For behold, from henceforth
All generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me:
And holy is his name.*

*And his mercy is on them that fear him
Throughout all generations.*

*He hath showed strength with his arm:
He hath scattered the proud
In the imagination of their hearts.*

*He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
And hath exalted the humble.*

*He hath filled the hungry with good things:
And the rich he hath sent empty away.*

*He remembering his mercy
Hath holpen his servant Israel.*

*As he promised to our forefathers,
Abraham and his seed for ever.*

*Glory be to the Father, the Son,
And the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
And ever shall be, world without end. Amen.*

Fern Hill

John Corigliano’s *Fern Hill* is a luminous choral setting of Dylan Thomas’s evocative poem of the same name. The work captures the poet’s nostalgic and bittersweet reflections on childhood, memory, and the passage of time, set against the idyllic landscape of Fernhill, a farm where Thomas spent his youth. This is also one of his most performed works.

The poem opens with the phrase, “Now, as I was young and easy...”—a striking juxtaposition of present and past. This subtle contradiction creates a temporal ambiguity, momentarily disorienting the listener and blurring the lines between memory and reality. In doing so, Dylan Thomas invites us to step back in time, experiencing the story not as a distant recollection, but as if we are present in the moment when it unfolds.

The choir delivers the text in a fluid, almost speech-like manner, allowing the natural rhythm of the poetry to guide the musical phrasing. The interplay between the full choir, mezzo-soprano solo, and solo quartets creates a constantly evolving journey, drawing the listener deeper into the narrative. A recurring violin motif weaves through the piece, its leaping and circling motion evoking the sensation of time looping back on itself—like a musical time machine transporting us to the past. Meanwhile, the orchestra enhances the setting by imitating the sounds of nature, from the rustling wind to the distant barking of foxes, immersing us fully in Fernhill rather than observing it from afar.

In the last stanza, the narrator switches to the present tense, and laments about the death of his childhood—to the inevitable whim of time.

-Jiabao Guo

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
The night above the dingle starry,
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

Fern Hill (continued)

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars
As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)

Upcoming Choral Concerts

Events are free unless otherwise noted.

Friday, May 2, 2025

Eastman-Rochester Chorus
Eastman Chorale
Eastman School Symphony Orchestra
Beethoven Missa Solemnis

Carolina Sullivan, soprano
Emily Kondrat, mezzo-soprano
Luke Honeck, tenor
S Joshua Sheppard, bass-baritone
William Weinert, conductor

Kodak Hall at Eastman Theatre • 7:30pm



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UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER