

MUSIC TO ILLUMINATE, CHALLENGE, AND INSPIRE!

seraphim  
**SONGS OF EARTH**



SATURDAY

March 4, 2023, 8:00 pm  
The Eliot Church of Newton

SUNDAY

March 5, 2023, 3:00 pm  
First Church in Cambridge

25TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON | 2022-2023



www.seraphimsingers.org

Jennifer Lester, *Music Director*  
Heinrich Christensen, *Organist*  
Alison LaRosa, *Flutist*

# SONGS OF EARTH

In principio..... Patricia Van Ness (b. 1951)

Songs of Smaller Creatures..... Abbie Betinis (b. 1980)

1. The Bees' Song
2. A Noiseless Patient Spider
3. Envoi

God's Grandeur..... Benjamin Britten ( 1913-1976)

Our Burning World..... Rhiannon Randle (b. 1993)

. . . .

Kokopeli..... Katherine Hoover (1959-2018)

The Book of Hours..... Daniel Pinkham (1923-2006)

At Matins - In the stillness of the night the Church is at prayer.

At Lauds - In the distant east the grey of dawn appears.

Nature awakens and praises God.

. . . .

Do I Wake or Sleep? ..... Edie Hill (b. 1962)

Songs of Gold..... Christina Whitten Thomas (b. 1979)

1. I Was There
3. Interlude (Flute Solo)
4. Canticle

God's Grandeur..... Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

\* Supported by the Irving Forbes Centennial Grant from Choral Arts New England, a grant from the Newton Cultural Council (a local council supported by the Mass Cultural Council and the City of Newton), and a generous gift from Seraphim patrons Sarah and Staffan Ericsson.

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The Seraphim Singers is a member of the Greater Boston Choral Consortium, a cooperative association of diverse choral groups. To learn more, visit [www.bostonsings.org](http://www.bostonsings.org).

Seraphim concerts explore diverse composers and varied repertoire, with newly commissioned pieces performed alongside timeless gems. The north star that guides our programming is the exploration of deeply human themes: longing, protest, suffering, and transcendence. We use choral music to illuminate and challenge us to act on pressing issues in our world, including homelessness, climate change, and racial justice.

## ARTIST BIOS

### Jennifer Lester, *music director*

Jennifer Lester, Founder and Music Director of The Seraphim Singers, is among the outstanding choral conductors of her generation. Critically acclaimed for creative programming and well-known as an unflagging advocate of new music, Ms. Lester presents emotional and musically engaging performances of challenging but rewarding repertoire. Ms. Lester has commissioned works from both nationally known and local living composers, including Avner Dorman, Shruthi Rajasekar, Christina Whitten Thomas, Carson Cooman, Julian Wachner, and James Woodman. She is committed to diversifying the choral repertoire, programming and commissioning music by women and non-white composers.

Ms. Lester has served as Music Director at the Church of Our Saviour in Brookline and as Associate Music Director and Organist of Saint Paul Parish in Cambridge. She is a past Dean of the Boston Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Also a Fulbright scholar, Ms. Lester holds a Bachelor's degree from the New England Conservatory of Music, and a Master of Music in choral conducting from Yale University.



**Heinrich Christensen, organist**

A native of Denmark, Heinrich Christensen came to the US in 1998 and received an Artist Diploma in Organ Performance from the Boston Conservatory, in addition to degrees from conservatories in Denmark and France. He was appointed Music Director of historic King's Chapel in the year 2000, after serving as affiliate organist under the direction of Daniel Pinkham during the final two years of Dr. Pinkham's 42-year tenure at the church.



Heinrich was a prizewinner at the international organ competitions in Odense and Erfurt and has given solo recitals on four continents. He has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Boston Ballet, Handel & Haydn Society, and numerous choruses in the greater Boston area.

An avid proponent of contemporary music, he has premiered works by Daniel Pinkham, Carson Cooman, Graham Gordon Ramsay, James Woodman,

and several others. He has recorded several organ and choral CDs, and Daniel Pinkham's works for solo voice and organ with Florestan Recital Project.

**Alison LaRosa, flutist**

Alison LaRosa majored in flute at The Catholic University of America, where she studied with Vanita Jones and Tom Perazzoli, and always made time for choral singing. When she landed in Boston eleven years ago, one of her first calls was to Jennifer Lester to audition for Seraphim, and she immediately fell in love with the repertoire and the people. Alison sang alto with Seraphim for several years and currently makes a joyful noise with King's Chapel Choir, Night Song (a weekly Sunday evening compline liturgy at First Church in Cambridge), and as a cantor at various Catholic churches in the area. By day she fundraises for Tufts University. Alison lives in Cambridge with her partner, Heath, and their playful Portuguese water dog, Charley.



**Edie Hill, composer**

Described as "...bold...radiant, deftly crafted..." (Musical America), Edie Hill's music is performed all over the world. Venues have included Lincoln Center, Met Cloisters (NYC), Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall (NYC), Muis Sacrum in Arnhem, Holland, LA County Museum of Art, Library of Congress, Minneapolis' Walker Arts Center, St. Paul's Schubert Club, Berwald Hall (Stockholm Sweden), Liviu Cultural Center (Romania), Fészek Művészklub (Budapest), and St. Peter's Basilica (Vatican City).



A three-time McKnight Artist Fellow and a two-time Bush Artist Fellow, Hill has received grants from the Jerome Foundation, ASCAP, New Music USA, Meet The Composer, Minnesota State Arts Board, Chamber Music America, and was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Recently, The Crossing's recording of her Spectral Spirits was nominated for a Grammy for best choral performance in 2023. She has a B.A. from Bennington College and earned her M.A. and Ph.D. degrees at the University of Minnesota.

Composer in Residence at Schubert Club from 2005-2017 she ran and grew the Mentorship Program for high school composers. She was Composer Mentor for MN Varsity for composers 14-18 years of age co-sponsored by The American Composers Forum and Classical Minnesota Public Radio. She has lectured at colleges, universities and various institutions in the States and abroad.

For Hill, writing music is an opportunity to research, learn, muse, reach down deep, and allow inspiration to come from the stuff of life. Her compositions are fueled by her experiences, passions and curiosities.

*Photo credit: Leslie Crane Photography*

## BIOS

Danielle Cadena Deulen, poet



Dr. Danielle Cadena Deulen's poetry collections include *Desire Museum* (forthcoming from BOA Editions in 2023), *Our Emotions Get Carried Away Beyond Us*, *Lovely Asunder*, and *American Libretto*. She has also published a memoir, *The Riots*, and is co-creator and host of the poetry podcast "*Lit from the Basement*."

Her honors include a Pushcart Prize, an Oregon Literary Fellowship, an Ohio Arts Council Individual Excellence Award, an AWP Prize in Creative Nonfiction, a GLCA New Writers Award, the Utah Book Award, a Dorothy Sargent Rosen-

berg Award, and a Jay C. and Ruth Halls Poetry Fellowship from the Wisconsin Institute for Creative Writing.

She was born and raised in the Northwest, but now makes her home in Atlanta where she teaches for the graduate creative writing program at Georgia State University. Her author website is [danielledeulen.net](http://danielledeulen.net).

## COMMISSION: DO I WAKE OR SLEEP?

### Poet's notes

This poem is from my forthcoming collection, *Desire Museum*, which will be published with BOA Editions in fall 2023. I wrote this poem after another night of waking up in a panic and instinctively checking on my sleeping children. I'd been reading articles about the climate crisis, considering the difficulty of holding both hope and anxiety for the future of this planet—emotions necessary to motivate an active response instead of slipping into a numb resignation.

This poem is an attempt to dramatize the mind of a single speaker who leaps between hope, anxiety, and the desire to numb—the closed, empty brackets meant to indicate the spaces in thought that can't be articulated. The poem includes 'remixed' phrases from John Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale,' a poem in

## COMMISSION: DO I WAKE OR SLEEP?

### The Poem

#### Remix with a Few Lines from Keats by Danielle Cadena Deulen

my throat is dry [ ] a drowsy numbness pains [ ] my sense as though [ ] obscured  
by smoke [ ] I drive on roads dividing patchwork farmland, fences [ ] wide-eyed  
llamas [ ] perpetual surprise [ ] after a dream, I sip water in the dark [ ] I don't want  
to sleep [ ] my husband breathing deeply [ ] my children twisting in their beds [ ]  
smoke rising from the fields [ ] end of harvest razing [ ] I lift the rock, find a family  
of woodlice [ ] curled away from me [ ] sleeping or pretending to sleep [ ] hemlock  
lacing the road's shoulders [ ] my too-dry eyes [ ] the tender babies are paler [ ]  
than their parents, little ghosts [ ] rolled in on themselves, my children are sleeping  
[ ] when I lift the blanket [ ] when, after a dream, I smoke in the dark [ ] no bird  
singing [ ] nothing to ode [ ] the sharp scent of pine, wet soil, beast musk, rain [ ]  
the dull opiate of things [ ] what will outlive us [ ] I turn on the screen [ ] a panel  
of men in a void, screaming [ ] cornflowers curling into rust [ ] I breathe in smoke  
[ ] fists curled shut [ ] the green of marijuana fields [ ] the pungent scent of [ ]  
bodies curled in sleep [ ] as if sleep were a cure [ ] one minute past, and Lethewards  
[ ] hear that crackling? [ ] pine cones dropping like heavy flames [ ] glaciers  
splitting [ ] howling ghosts [ ] what earth will be left for [ ] my children cry out in  
their sleep [ ] dark room filling with the smoke I exhale [ ] hills roiling [ ] the  
screaming stays while the screen goes dark [ ] I can't see it disappearing [ ] to thy  
high requiem [ ] my throat is dry [ ] do I wake or sleep? [ ] I don't want to wake

Supported by the Irving Forbes Centennial Grant from Choral Arts New England, a grant from the Newton Cultural Council (a local council supported by the Mass Cultural Council and the City of Newton), and a generous gift from Seraphim patrons Sarah and Staffan Ericsson.

## COMMISSION: DO I WAKE OR SLEEP?

continued >>

which the speaker longs to transport himself away from mortal suffering and admits he has been 'half in love' with the idea of dying as a form of escape.

The final line of this poem is meant to hold two contradictory ideas: 'wake' meaning both to awaken to our present difficulties and to bear witness to death, which is what will inevitably happen if we don't awaken.

### Composer's notes

In most of my life as a composer, I've had the good fortune of working on pieces that help me express my passions and pieces which challenge me to grapple with difficult problems. When Jennifer Lester introduced me to Danielle Caden Deulen's powerful "Remix with a Few Lines from Keats," I was quickly drawn in. The mother, awake at night, wondering "what earth will be left..." and "what will outlive us" as she watches her "children twisting in their beds," resonated with me. So did the question of whether to numb out the bleak truth or to remain awake and aware.

Deulen beautifully captures the wakeful restlessness and the fitful dreaming of living in a world in peril. I wanted to capture this in the music by using stark harmonies and occasional drones slipped in under quick phrases. These quick phrases are juxtaposed with the occasional "pastoral" scene with music that is more melismatic and melodic. Deulen 'remixes' her own words with a few lines from Keats' 'Ode To A Nightingale'. We're in a dream state and a living nightmare all at once. The language, at some points stark and blunt, "no bird singing [ ] nothing to ode" prompted musical settings that are stark and blunt where singers are instructed to sing 'Without Expression,' 'neither loud nor soft' and at times sensual as in "sharp scent of pine, wet soil, beast musk, rain" where I was prompted to draw out a word and/or musical line.

There are bracketed spaces throughout the poem, sometimes breaking up thoughts and phrases. For most of these, I chose silences of varying durations. It was my intention to cause discomfort. Often, the musical phrases feel cut short by silence. The idea is that this planet, teeming with life that is being cut short, is almost too much to fathom, but is also too close and too real to ignore. So, do we wake or sleep?

## OTHER PROGRAM NOTES

*In principio*, Patricia Van Ness

Composer, violinist, and poet Patricia Van Ness (b. 1951) draws upon elements of medieval and Renaissance music to create a signature voice that has been hailed by musicians, audiences, and critics. Music Web UK called her "a modern-day Hildegard von Bingen" with an ability to compose music "ecstatic and ethereal," "both ancient and new." As in medieval aesthetics, her music and poetry explore the relationship between beauty and the Divine. Van Ness has been commissioned, recorded, and performed internationally by ensembles including The King's Singers, St. Martin's Voices (St. Martin in the Fields), The Heidelberg New Music Festival, and Chanticleer, among numerous others. Her current long-term project is to create a new anthem for each of the 150 psalms for her collection *Music for the Psalms*. Van Ness has been the Staff Composer at First Church in Cambridge since 1996. For more information and scores, visit [www.patriciavanness.com](http://www.patriciavanness.com).

*In principio / In the Beginning* was commissioned by Youth pro Musica, St. Cecilia's Church, Boston (Hazel Somerville, Director) in 2002. The Latin text is adapted from the book of Genesis and Psalms 91 and 148. A chant-like soprano soli reverently soars over a drone for the start of the piece, "In the beginning..." This reverence blossoms into awe by the end of the soli, setting the stage for the next section, in which three treble voices sing together in harmony. Exhorting all of creation to praise God, the choir calls upon stars, waters, snow, and fire, the shimmering harmonies changing to reflect the objects of their call. The section ends with the promise of God's protection for all, building to a climax, and then settling into a drone. The chant-like soprano soli returns for the amen, ending the contemplative prayer.

Van Ness writes: "For me, beauty is expressed most vividly in the music and illuminated manuscripts from the medieval and Renaissance eras, and these rich eras have inspired and influenced my own creative works. My musical compositions use modal scales to create chant, homophony, and polyphony, and the fiber art I do, free-hand embroidery, is reminiscent of the borders of medieval illuminated manuscripts."

*Songs of Smaller Creatures*, Abbie Betinis

One of America's most frequently commissioned young composers, Abbie Betinis (b. 1980) is a recipient of the 2009 and 2015 McKnight Artist Fellowships, grants from the American Composers Forum, and a commission from the American Choral Directors Association. Her music has been described by the *New York Times* as "inventive and richly melodic." Betinis, a St. Olaf College graduate and former member of the Dale Warland Singers, teaches composition at Concordia University in St. Paul, MN.

*Songs of Smaller Creatures'* three short choral tone-poems were partially premiered in 2005 by the Young New Yorkers' Chorus (Nathan Davis, conductor) and received a full

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premiere in St. Paul, MN by the University of Minnesota Chamber Choir (Kathy Romney, conductor) after winning that university's Swan Composer Prize (2006).

The composer writes: "*Bees' Song* takes its silly text from British poet Walter de la Mare (1873–1953), who included no less than 33 Z's in his original poem. This setting highlights those sounds, as each part buzzes around looking for a nice cadence on which to land.

"*A Noiseless Patient Spider*, setting Walt Whitman's (1819–1892) infamous excerpt from *Leaves of Grass*, compares the questing soul to a spider who launches forth her own web in order to explore the space around her. Beginning with each of the eight 'spider legs' stepping slowly to the edge of a promontory, the voices soon begin the process of weaving a web of their own.

"*Envoi* turns Charles Swinburne's (1837–1909) simple text into a flocking of a mass of butterflies. The nonsense syllables propel the piece while providing a subtle flapping of tiny wings effect, as if the singers are suddenly there in the thick of the migration."

*God's Grandeur*, from *A.M.D.G. Ad majorem Dei gloriam*, Benjamin Britten

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976) was an English composer, conductor, and pianist, and a prominent figure in 20th-century music. Although he contributed to a variety of musical genres, he is best known for his theatrical works, including his operas *Peter Grimes*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, and *Death in Venice*. A life-long pacifist and conscientious objector, his anti-war stance shows prominently in his music, particularly in his War Requiem.

Born on St. Cecilia's Day (November 22nd) in Lowestoft, England, he received his first musical training from his mother, who was an amateur singer. He began composing at the age of five, and when he was eleven, he met the composer Frank Bridge, who took the young Britten under his wing and tutored him in composition. At Bridge's suggestion, Britten entered the Royal College of Music in 1930. Following graduation, Britten took a job with the BBC's film unit, and wrote nearly 40 scores for the theatre, cinema, and radio. In 1939, as political tensions in Europe mounted, Britten decided to head to North America, accompanied by his friend and eventual partner, Peter Pears.

Britten wrote the seven works that make up the *A.M.D.G.* during his time in the United States. Notes on the manuscript tell us this work was specifically composed for Peter Pears' Round Table Singers, who had planned to premiere the songs in London in November of 1939. Due to the start of World War II, this premiere was cancelled. When Britten returned to England in 1942, US customs officials prevented him from bringing several scores back with him, including the *A.M.D.G.* The manuscript remained in the United States until after Britten's death. It finally saw its first performance in 1984 and was formally published in 1989.

The texts of this work are seven poems by Jesuit priest and poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1989). *A.M.D.G.—Ad majorem Dei gloriam* ("For the greater glory of God") is

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the Latin motto of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), the order of the Catholic Church to which Hopkins belonged.

*God's Grandeur* is the third movement in the *A.M.D.G.* and begins with a dramatic musical gesture—a large leap down, and then an even larger leap back up, giving a sense of the expanse of God's grandeur. God's power is compared to an electric current, the angular lines resembling the jagged shape of lightning. The piece is rife with text-painting, containing chromatic runs for the words "bleared," "smeared," and "smudge," a clip-clop rhythm for "has trod," and a marching rhythm for "nor can foot feel being shod."

While Gwyneth Walker's setting of this text lends sadness and regret to the phrase "and all is seared with trade, bleared, smeared with toil," Britten's setting evokes outrage at man's destruction of nature, a fury vented through the repetition of this line of text and the building of the music to the highest notes in the piece, a searing high A in the soprano and high F# for the alto.

Britten's music becomes more lyrical and takes on an uplifting quality when describing the persistence and resilience of nature even in the face of such destruction, and the miracle of each new dawn. As this miracle is attributed to God in the form of the Holy Ghost, the music becomes soft and mysterious, reaching a quick climax of awe before settling into a quiet reverence. Out of this, each voice part enters with the same dramatic theme from the beginning, but this time softly—energetic, but hushed. As the theme repeats, the four voices converge for the first time in the piece for a harmonized version of this theme. This harmonized theme is repeated and slowly fades out, giving the impression the grandeur of God still persists, even when we no longer hear it.

*Our Burning World*, Rhiannon Randle

Rhiannon Randle (b. 1993) is an award-winning composer, violinist, soprano, teacher, and emerging conductor based in London. She graduated with BA Hons in Music (2014) and M.Phil. in Composition (2015) from Girton College, University of Cambridge, where she studied composition with Jeremy Thurlow and Richard Causton. She has produced numerous choral works and instrumental music, and has written three substantial one-act chamber operas, one in association with the Royal Opera House. Her music has been performed throughout the UK, Europe, and the US by artists and ensembles including Britten Sinfonia, Heath Quartet, Sarah Connolly, the choirs of King's and Trinity colleges, Cambridge, and Christ Church, Oxford. She has been commissioned by Choir & Organ for its New Music Series and serves as Composer-in-Residence for St Michael's, Cornhill in the City of London. Randle combines a busy composing schedule with singing, teaching on the academic staff at Guildhall School, and tutoring on harmony, counterpoint, and compositional subjects at Cambridge University.

## NOTES

From the notes in the score: First performed by the choir of St. Michael's, Cornhill on 17 February 2020, *Our Burning World* is a fervent entreaty for the preservation of the environment from the catastrophe of climate change, while the means are still within our grasp. As if to suggest the fractured bond between humanity and nature, the anthem is tightly constructed around a core melodic motif, yet is unsettled by the ominous tritone interval suffusing its textures both horizontally and vertically. The voices sing as the choral persona of the earth itself, in Malcolm Guite's poem specially written at the composer's request. His striking text transforms through imagery unique to our contemporary crisis the prescient message of the lectionary readings that accompanied the premiere, from Isaiah 51:17-20 and Mark 14:32-42. Imagined as a created child of God, suffering with humankind and likewise defiled, the planet pleads for redemption and for the replanting of "the sacred wood" through the miracle of the Crucifixion. Whether as prayer for saving grace or time-honored symbol of hope, the message is clear: words without deeds are insufficient. And yet words with music are a powerful summons, and in *Our Burning World* are a wake-up call to turn passion into action.

*Do I Wake or Sleep?*, Edie Hill

For notes about this piece, see pages 6-8 of this booklet.

*Songs of Gold*, Christina Whitten Thomas

Christina Whitten Thomas's works have been performed throughout the United States, including premieres at Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, and the Disney Concert Hall. She is particularly committed to writing for the voice and is passionate about working with contemporary poets and original texts. She has collaborated with poets including Jay Parini, Naomi Shihab Nye, Marian Partee, Pam McAllister, Abigail Carroll, Hilary Miminguaquay, and Deirdre Lockwood. She has received commissions from choral groups including the Los Angeles Master Chorale Chamber Singers, the Golden Bridge, the Seraphim Singers of Boston, the Denver Women's Chorus, and Vox Femina of Los Angeles.

Thomas received her B.A. in music from Middlebury College in 2002 and her M.M. in composition from the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music in 2005. In addition to composing, Christina is an active vocalist in Los Angeles County and serves as the Director of Worship Arts at La Cañada Congregational church. As an educator, she has been teaching for over fifteen years and maintains an extensive studio of voice and piano students. She currently resides with her family in Claremont, California.

## NOTES

Christina shares her reflections about *Songs of Gold*: "I often approach composition as if I am writing a story, with a prologue, exposition, increasing conflict, climax, resolution, and epilogue. As the prologue to *I Was There* begins, I imagine a narrator reminiscing about the past. The flute enters as a far-away dream, reflective of nature, of a moment that now exists only in memory, with a sigh of remembrance and nostalgia. As the story unfolds with the line 'No matter what the yellow wind has taken,' the flute accompanies the choir melodically, here more a part of the story than a dream, although the flute shifts between the two roles throughout the piece. This movement is loosely strophic in structure, three 'scenes' structured around the seasons (spring; summer and autumn; winter). The music builds to the climax, 'days we cupped like water in our hands.' We then hear a section of resolution, followed by an epilogue. I intended to capture the pacing and mood of a walk through the woods with the tempo and character of this piece..

"..The Interlude provides textural contrast as it features the solo flute, while it incorporates melodic motifs from all three choral movements. It..transitions to the opening key of the fourth movement, introducing the melodic content of *Canticle's* opening statement.

"For me, *Canticle* invites its reader to forge a relationship with nature; to listen, to be patient, and to reflect on the past on a grand level, the history of mountains, the continuity of natural beauty, and the threshold between human existence and the natural environment. The poem reminds us that we are part of something larger than ourselves; it urges us to appreciate things for what they are and to admire the constants in nature, especially when human life can be so inconsistent. Nature invites us to listen for harmonies that we might not hear in the busyness of life—'music older than the human ear'—music's heritage. We may embrace the past and the present, 'not to choose between tomorrow and today.' We can live in the moment, yet also celebrate our past, our heritage, 'to sing and let sing.'

"This final movement opens with a choral fanfare. Following this introit, the choir takes off on an energetic, slightly frantic, recitation of the poem through dancing rhythms and edgy harmonies, perhaps in part to capture our rushing around in life. In the middle of the movement a contrasting section of calm appears, as if one has stopped, finally, to listen, to consider the lessons of nature—a moment of patience, of waiting, of sitting still to listen, much as the mountains have done for millions of years. Yet, only a fleeting moment, before the choir and flute take wing again in a final dramatic crescendo.

"I titled the suite *Songs of Gold* since each poem invokes this color. Gold conveys a sense of antiquity, heritage, history, and legacy, as well as reminiscence, memory, and nostalgia, all themes found in these poems."



## NOTES

*God's Grandeur*, Gwyneth Walker

Dr. Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947) taught at Oberlin College Conservatory for many years after receiving her DMA in Composition from Brown. A resident of Braintree, VT, she pursues an award-winning career as a full-time composer (as many as a dozen new choral works each year) and her catalog includes over 130 commissioned works.

*God's Grandeur* was commissioned in 2001 by Seattle's Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble (Loren Pontén, Music Director), and the texts are three poems by English poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1899) which focus on "the glory of God as especially manifested in the beauty of nature."

The composer writes: "The musical settings endeavor to allow the inherent rhythms of the words to speak. Therefore, especially in the first song, meters change often. Central images in the opening song are *The world is charged with the grandeur of God* [Triumphant octave leaps in the chorus to portray "charged" ] and "...the Holy Ghost over the bent world broods...with ah! bright wings" [followed by fluttering of wings as "la-la"s]. The image of wings connects the first and second song (based on *The Windhover*). Against a fluttering background, soli voices sing "I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin..." The thrill of watching the bird in flight leads directly into the closing song: *Glory be to God* for dappled things. As in the opening song, this is triumphant music. Yet also tender ("finches' wings"). The combination of delicacy and grandeur is the essence of these poems, and of the musical settings."

*Program notes by Abbie Betinis, Patricia Van Ness, Dr. Gwyneth Walker, Rhiannon Randle, Edie Hill, Christina Whitten Thomas, Danielle Cadena Deulen, and Teri Kowiak, edited by Teri Kowiak.*

## TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

*In principio*, Patricia Van Ness

Text from Genesis I, Psalm 148, and Psalm 91

*In principio, spiritus Dei  
ferebatur super aquas.  
Laudate eum sol et luna  
omnes stellae lumines,  
Caeli caelorum  
et aquae quae super caelos sunt.  
Laudate Dominum de terra,  
Draconnes et omnes abyssi,  
ignis et grando nix et glacies.  
In scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi  
et sub alis eius sperabis.  
Amen.*

In the beginning, the spirit of God  
moved upon the face of the waters.  
Praise God, sun and moon,  
all stars of light,  
the heavens of heavens,  
and the waters that be above the heavens.  
Praise God from the earth,  
you dragons and all deeps,  
fire and hail, snow and vapor.  
God shall cover thee with his feathers,  
and under God's wings shall thou trust.  
Amen.

*Songs of Smaller Creatures*, Abbie Betinis

1. The Bees' Song

Text by Walter de la Mare, edited and adapted by the composer

Thousandz of thornz there be  
On the Rozez where gozez  
The Zebra of Zee:  
Sleek, striped, and hairy,  
The steed of the Fairy  
Princess of Zee.

Weighty with blossomz be  
All the Rozez that growzez  
In thickets of Zee.  
And he nozez the poziez  
Of Rozez that grozez  
So luvez'm and free.

Thousandz of thornz there be  
On the Rozez he knowzez  
Weren't honeyed for he,  
But to breathe  
a sweet incense  
To solace the Princess,  
Princess of Zee.

## TEXTS

### 2. *A Noiseless Patient Spider* Text by Walt Whitman

A noiseless patient spider  
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory,  
it stood, isolated;  
Mark'd how, to explore the  
vacant vast surrounding,  
It launch'd forth filament, filament,  
filament, out of itself;  
Ever unreeling them –  
ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you, O my soul, where you stand,  
Surrounded, surrounded,  
in measureless oceans of space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing –  
Seeking the spheres, to connect them;  
Till the bridge you will need,  
be form'd – till the ductile anchor hold;  
Till the gossamer thread you fling,  
catch somewhere, O my soul.

### 3. *Envoi* Text by Charles Swinburne

Fly, white butterflies, out to sea,  
Frail, pale wings for the wind to try,  
Small white wings that we scarce can see,  
Fly!

Some fly light as a laugh of glee,  
Some fly soft as a long, low sigh;  
All to the haven where each would be,  
Fly!

### *God's Grandeur*, Benjamin Britten

The world is charged with  
the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out like shining from shook foil.  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil.  
Crushed.  
Why do men then now not reckon his rod?  
Generations have trod;  
and all is seared with trade;  
bleared, smeared with toil.  
And all is seared, and wears man's smudge  
and shares man's smell.  
The soil is bare now, nor can foot feel,  
being shod.

The world is charged with  
the grandeur of God.  
And for all this, nature is never spent.  
There lives the dearest freshness  
deep down things.  
And through the last lights off  
the black West went,  
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward,  
springs.  
Because the Holy Ghost  
over the bent world broods  
with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.  
The world is charged with  
the grandeur of God.

## TEXTS

### *Our Burning World*, Rhiannon Randle

Our burning world is turning in despair,  
I hear her sighing through the air,  
seething, seething.  
Oh rouse yourself! This is your wake up call,  
for your pollution forms my funeral pall.  
My last ice lapses, slips into the sea.  
Will you unfreeze your tears,  
and weep for me?

Or are you sleeping still, taking your rest?  
The hour has come,  
Wake up to change at last,  
and change for good.  
Repent, return, replant the sacred wood.  
You are my children, I too am God's child,  
and we have both been defiled.  
But God hangs with us on the hallowed tree,  
that we might both be rescued, both, be free.

### *Do I Wake or Sleep?*, Edie Hill (See page 7 of the program booklet for the text)

### *Songs of Gold*, Christina Whitten Thomas

#### 1. *I Was There* Text by Jay Parini, from "House of Days"

I say it, I was there.  
No matter what the yellow wind has taken,  
I was there, with you.  
We have walked out early in the spring  
beside the river, when the sun's red shield  
was caught in branches  
and the bud-tips bled.  
We have plucked ripe berries  
from a hill of brush  
in mid-July,  
and watched the days go down in flames  
in late September,  
when the poplar shook its foil.

We have walked on snow in January light:  
the long white fields were adamantly bright.  
I say it, I was there.  
No matter that the evidence is gone,  
we heard the honking of the long black geese  
and saw them float beyond the town.  
Gone all those birds, loose-wristed leaves,  
the snowfire, days  
we cupped like water in our hands.  
So much has slipped through fragile hands.  
The evidence is lost, but not these words.  
You have my word:  
I say it, I was there.

## TEXTS

### 4. *Canticle* Abigail Carroll

To agree with the lake,  
To sing and let sing  
bristle grass, a white sail,  
beach stones  
mottling the shore  
in music older  
than the human ear,  
To be tutored  
by a bent reed,  
the smooth back  
of driftwood  
listing, concurring,  
To let nouns be nouns  
the way the mountains  
inhabit the grammar  
of their waiting,  
the way hawks  
refuse to apologize  
for flight,  
To let in the light  
as earth lets in  
the shining prophecies  
of rain,  
as monarchs  
let summer dance  
gold on the open invitation  
of their wings,  
To brother the wind,

Not to choose between  
tomorrow and today,  
Not to refuse the liturgies  
of the waves,  
the rhetoric  
of the glittering sun,  
To be undone  
To note the descant  
of a cloud, a cormorant,  
tree crickets' hum,  
the signature  
of glaciers scrawled  
on lichen rock,  
To defer to the willow,  
Not to prefer ignorance  
to the theories of swallows,  
the languages of the air,  
To enter the concert,  
the stirring,  
the singing,  
the way the bulrush enters  
its blooming,  
the way sky enters  
the glow of evening,  
the green-turning-flame  
of its song.

## TEXTS

### *God's Grandeur*, Gwyneth Walker Text by Gerard Manley Hopkins

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil.  
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil crushed.  
Why do men then now not reck his rod?  
Generations have trod;  
and all is seared with trade;  
... bleared, smeared with toil;  
and wears man's smudge and shares man's smell.  
The soil is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.  
The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
And for all this, nature is never spent.  
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;  
and though the last lights off the black West went,  
oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward springs  
because the Holy Ghost over the bent World broods  
with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

I caught this morning's minion,  
kingdom of daylight's dauphin,  
dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding  
of the rolling level underneath him steady air,  
and striding High there,  
how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing  
in his ecstasy! Then off, off forth on swing,  
as a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend:  
the hurl and gliding rebufed the big wind.  
My heart in hiding Stirred for a bird,  
the achiever of the mastery of the thing!  
I caught this morning's minion,  
kingdom daylight's dauphin,  
in his riding,  
Glory be to God!

continued >>

## TEXTS

*God's Grandeur*, Gwyneth Walker  
(continued)

Glory be to God for dappled things,  
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;  
Rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Fresh-fire-coal chestnut falls; finches' wings.  
Landscape plotted and pieced fold,  
fallow, and plough;  
And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim.  
Glory be to God for all things counter,  
original, spare, strange;  
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)  
With swift, slow, sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;  
he fathers forth whose beauty is past change:  
Praise him, praise him.  
Glory be to God for dappled things,  
for skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow,  
for rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;  
Praise him, praise him. Glory be to God.

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