



BELLEVUE CHAMBER CHORUS

Artistic Director: Ben Luedcke



Why We Sing

Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023, 7:30 pm

First Congregational Church
11061 NE 2nd St, Bellevue, WA

featuring Minju Kim, piano
Amie Stewart, horn
Jiyeon Yeo, violin

Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023, 3:00 pm

Emmanuel Episcopal Church
4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island, WA

*Bellevue Chamber
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Why We Sing

Let the Music Fill Your Soul Jacob Narverud (b. 1986)
Amie Stewart, Horn

Exultate Deo Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525-1594)
Warum, from Vier Quartette Op. 92 Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Rose Cheek'd Laura, Come Virgil Thomson (1896-1989)
Follow Your Saint arr. R. Vené
from Four Songs Set to the Poems of Thomas Campion

If Music Be the Food of Love David Dickau (b. 1953)
Julia Bezems, Student Assistant Conductor

My Song Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)

Intermission

Music of Living Dan Forrest (b. 1978)
Amie Stewart, Horn
Jiyeon Yeo, Violin

When Music Sounds John Rutter (b. 1945)

Why the Caged Bird Sings Judith Shatin (b. 1949)
Armistice 1918 (Everyone Sang) Craig Carnahan (b. 1951)

How Can I Keep From Singing? Robert Lowry (1826-1899)
arr. Taylor Davis (b. 1980)
Amie Stewart, Horn
Jiyeon Yeo, Violin

Program Notes

Jacob Narverud's piece, "**Let the Music Fill Your Soul**," utilizes an energetic dance-like accompaniment and a festive horn part to welcome all listeners. Dr. Robert Bode wrote the text and is a longtime conductor and vocal music pedagogue. Having served at University of Missouri at Kansas City and recently retired as director of Seattle's Choral Arts, the welcoming spirit of choral music is alive in Bode's text.

Come in, you sisters and brothers,
Come in, you cousins and daughters,
Come in, you seekers and doubters,
Let the music fill your soul.

Come in, you seers and dreamers,
Come in, you movers and shakers,
Come in, explorers and climbers, Let
the music make you whole.

Close your eyes and breathe together,
Sit beside a perfect stranger,
Open to the Life around you,
Let the music fill your soul.

Come in, you heroes and artists,
Come in, you scholars and rebels,
Come in, you singers and lovers, Let
the music make you whole.

– Robert Bode

Palestrina's five-voice motet - "**Exultate Deo**" - celebrates the power of music when praising God in song. Despite Palestrina living and working in Rome at a time where instruments would not have been used in church services, Palestrina employs several clever techniques to illustrate the text, including a march-like rhythm to "bring forth the drum," and a brass-like cacophony of rapidly rising lines to "blow the trumpet."

*Exultate Deo adiutori nostro; jubilate Deo Jacob.
Sumite psalmum, et date tympanum; psalterium
jucundum cum cithara.
Buccinate in neomenia tuba, in insigni die
solemnitatis vestræ.*

Sing joyfully to God our strength; sing loud unto
the God of Jacob
Take the psalm, bring forth the drum, the pleasant
harp, and the lute.
Blow the trumpet in the new moon, at the time
appointed for our feast day.

– from Psalm 81

Johannes Brahms is well known for his small chamber pieces, and this excerpt -
“**Warum**” - comes from one of several opuses of vocal quartets with piano. Much
like Palestrina, Brahms often selects melodic contours and rhythms that fit with the
literal meaning of the text: the opening line of the quartet seems to reach for the
heavens as the imitative vocal lines leap and rapidly ascend into the upper reaches
of the vocal range. In contrast, Brahms selects a lilting meter and sultry tone for
the remaining lines of poetry: even the gods are not immune to the power of song,
which pulls at the heart and stirs the passions.

*Warum doch erschallen himmelwärts die Lieder?
Zögen gerne nieder Sterne, die droben
Blinken und wallen,
Zögen sich Lunas Lieblich Umarmen,
Zögen die warmen,
Wonnigen Tage Seliger Götter
Gern uns herab!*

Why then do songs resound heavenward?
They would gladly lure down the stars, which
gleam and wander above;
they would entice Luna’s lovely embraces,
and invoke the warm, blissful days of blessed
gods -
gladly would they do this!

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Originally set for chamber ensemble and a single voice, Virgil Thomson’s Four Songs
Set to the Poems of Thomas Campion are love songs that have been arranged for
choir and piano. “**Rose Cheek’d Laura, Come**” and “**Follow Your Saint**”
invoke the power of music in different ways. In the former, the poet compares
the beauty of his beloved to that of music; however, unlike music which is fleeting
and contains unpleasant sounds, the beauty of the beloved is pure and eternal. In
contrast, “Follow Your Saint” takes the point of view of the songster whose songs

and affections go unnoticed. Rather than express remorse for having composed love songs, the poet acknowledges the cathartic qualities of music in saying, “it shall suffice that they were breath’d and died for her delight.”

Rose-cheek’d Laura, come,
Sing thou sweetly with thy beauty’s
Silent music, either other
Sweetly gracing.

Lovely forms do flow
From consent divinely framed;
Heav’n is music, and thy beauty’s
Birth is heavenly.

These dull notes we sing
Discords need for helps to grace them;
Only beauty purely loving
Knows no discord,

But still moves delight,
Like clear springs renew’d by flowing,
Ever perfect, ever in them-
Selves eternal.

– Thomas Campion (1567-1620)

Follow your saint, follow with accents sweet;
Haste you, sad notes, fall at her flying feet.
There, wrapp’d in cloud of sorrow, pity move,
And tell the ravisher of my soul I perish for her love:
But if she scorns my never-ceasing pain,
Then burst with sighing in her sight and ne’er return again.

All that I sung still to her praise did tend,
Still she was first; still she my songs did end;
Yet she my love and music both doth fly,
The music that her echo is and beauty’s sympathy.
Then let my notes pursue her scornful flight:
It shall suffice that they were breath’d and died for her delight.

– Thomas Campion (1567-1620)



Henry Heveningham’s poem, “**If Music Be the Food of Love**” borrows the first line from William Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, but is otherwise an original poem.

In this text the narrator is in love with a singer: as he watches from afar “pleasures invade both eye and ear,” however, his affections are not returned as “the treat is only sound.” David Dickau sets the well-known text in a neo-romantic style, with long phrases and expressive harmonies that create a constant ebb and flow of energy and tension. As in many musical settings of this text, rather than conclude the piece with a desperate request to be saved in the arms of the beloved, Dickau repeats the first line of text for a more triumphant conclusion: “Sing on!”

If music be the food of love,
Sing on till I am fill'd with joy;
For then my list'ning soul you move
With pleasures that can never cloy,
Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare
That you are music ev'rywhere.

Pleasures invade both eye and ear,
So fierce the transports are, they wound,
And all my senses feasted are,
Tho' yet the treat is only sound.
Sure I must perish by our charms,
Unless you save me in your arms.

– Henry Heveningham (1651-1700)

In his piece “**My Song**,” Latvian composer Ēriks Ešenvalds selected a text by Rabindranath Tagore, an Indian poet, philosopher, and social reformer. The original context by Tagore was explicitly of a parent singing to their child about the comforting and guiding power of song. Though Ēriks Ešenvalds changed the words to broaden the context, the hopeful wishes of light, happiness, and love shine through.

This song of mine will wind its music
Around you like the fond arms of love.
This song of mine will carry your sight into the heart of things
like a faithful star in the dark night over your road!
My song will be like a pair of wide wings to your dreams, Like
the fond arms of love it will wind its music around you.
My song will take you to the verge of unknown.
When you are in a crowd it will surround you with its strength.

When you are alone it will stay by your side
Like a faithful star in the dark night over your road!
My song will be like a pair of wide wings to your dreams,
Like the fond arms of love it will wind its music around you, my song of love!
And when my voice is silent, my song will live in you.

– Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Dan Forrest’s **“The Music of Living”** features both violin and horn soloists with a relentless piano accompaniment. The poem reflects the transformative power of music, as the full human spectrum of emotions is valued: rather than fear the sad songs, to be an artist is to embrace all life has to offer. Rather than hide from pain or grief, “the music of living” is that small voice that compels one to make new songs, to risk falling, and to rise and keep trying.

Giver of life, Creator of all that is lovely,
Teach me to sing the words to your song.

I want to feel the music of living;
And not fear the sad songs, but from them make new songs
Composed of both laughter and tears.

Giver of life, Creator of all that is lovely,
Teach me to dance to the sounds of your world.

I want to move in rhythm with your plan.
Help me to follow your leading.
To risk even falling, to rise and keep trying,
For you are leading the dance.

– Anonymous

John Rutter’s **“When Music Sounds”** contains a footnote “in homage to J.S. Bach.” The music is marked by a sustained vocal melody paired with an accompanimental bass line and constant treble pulse reminiscent of many Baroque compositions. In comparison to many of today’s more dense compositions, the thin texture paints an image of one transported to some unearthly dreamworld to gracefully drift among the clouds, perhaps as if enchanted by the hypnotic music itself. The accompaniment only pauses during a short a cappella section and tirelessly spins out note after note:

perhaps the ever-present undulation is meant to embody the passing of time and the composer's – and Bach's – lifelong dedication to their craft.

When music sounds, gone is the earth I know,
And all her lovely things even lovelier grow;
Her flowers in vision flame, her forest trees
Lift burdened branches, stilled with ecstasies.

Paul Laurence Dunbar was born in Ohio soon after the American Civil War to his formerly enslaved parents. Judith Shatin sets Dunbar's most famous poem, titled "Sympathy," though commonly known as **"Why the Caged Bird Sings."** Maya Angelou continued the metaphor, writing her own poem, "Caged Bird" and named her autobiography after Dunbar's poem. Judith Shatin employs the piano to emulate the rattling of the cage. Meanwhile, the dissonant chords and sharply attacked notes portray the violent and murderous acts that Black Americans have had to endure, and the desperate sighs in the vocal lines underscore the ongoing struggle for racial justice in the United States.

I know what the caged bird feels, alas!
When the sun is bright on the upland slopes;
When the wind stirs soft through the springing grass,
And the river flows like a stream of glass;
When the first bird sings and the first bud opes,
And the faint perfume from its chalice steals—
I know what the caged bird feels!

I know why the caged bird beats his wing
Till its blood is red on the cruel bars;
For he must fly back to his perch and cling
When he fain would be on the bough a-swing;
And a pain still throbs in the old, old scars
And they pulse again with a keener sting—
I know why he beats his wing!

I know why the caged bird sings, ah me,
When his wing is bruised and his bosom sore,—
When he beats his bars and he would be free;

It is not a carol of joy or glee,
But a prayer that he sends from his heart's deep core,
But a plea, that upward to Heaven he flings—
I know why the caged bird sings!

– Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

Craig Carnahan's "**Armistice 1918**" sets the poem by Siegfried Sassoon, "Everyone Sang," which was written in April of 1919, shortly after the end of World War I. Craig Carnahan writes:

I was drawn to the contrasting moods found in the poetry – at times ecstatic and exuberant, and at other times subdued and reflective. There is joy that the war has ended, but sadness at the tremendous loss. Throughout, two images dominate: the communal power of voices united in song and the unbridled joy of freedom embodied by birds in flight. This, then, is a celebration of the resiliency of the human spirit, building to the powerful closing "...and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done." Ultimately, Sassoon leaves us to savor this sublime sense of the eternal – of the song that has no end.

– Craig Carnahan

Everyone suddenly burst out singing;
And I was filled with such delight
As prisoned birds must find in freedom,
winging wildly across the white
Orchards and dark-green fields; on– on– and out of sight.



Everyone's voice was suddenly lifted;
And beauty came like the setting sun:
My heart was shaken with tears; and horror
Drifted away... O, but Everyone
Was a bird; and the song was wordless; the singing will never be done.

– Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)

The uplifting text and simple melody of "**How Can I Keep From Singing?**" has been the subject of multiple choral arrangements, including this one by Taylor Davis with violin and oboe (adapted for horn). The original music was written by American Baptist minister Robert Lowry, and the text, originally titled "Always Rejoicing" and attributed to "Pauline T.," seems to have been first published in

1868. The final verse was added and popularized in the 1950s by Pete Seeger and other folk revivalists. Perhaps no song better captures the essence of Why We Sing: “though darkness round me close. . . no storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I’m clinging.” How can we possibly keep from singing?

My life flows on in endless song above Earth’s lamentation,
I hear the real, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife I hear the music ringing,
It sounds an echo in my soul; how can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm, while to that rock I’m clinging.
Since love is lord of heav’n and earth; how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble sick with fear and hear their death-knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing!
To prison cells and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging,
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

– Pauline T.

~ Program notes by Ben Luedcke

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Our Artistic Director:



Ben Luedcke Ben Luedcke began as Artistic Director of the Bellevue Chamber Chorus in 2019, and he brings a variety of conducting and leadership experiences to the organization. Ben is the Minister of Music at Seattle First Baptist Church in downtown Seattle, and the Artistic Director of the *Masterworks Choral Ensemble* in Olympia. He is currently finishing his Doctorate of Musical Arts in choral conducting at University of Washington, and he has held teaching positions at UW in the Choral, Musicology, and English departments.

Hailing from the Midwest, Ben completed a Bachelor of Music Education at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, and he left a mark on that choral community as both a voice teacher and as the conductor and founder of several startup organizations. Ben was the co-founder and director of Voces Aestatis, a Wisconsin-based professional choir that specialized in the a cappella repertoire of the sixteenth century, as well as the director and singer in two early music chamber ensembles, *Half and Half* and *Musica Apéritif*. For ten years Ben was the founder and artistic director of *Madison Summer Choir*, a large community chorus that performed choral orchestral works. Finally, Ben was the conductor and co-founder of the *University of Wisconsin Men's Choir*, a student and community tenor/bass ensemble.

Ben completed his Master's in Choral Conducting at University of Iowa, and subsequently served as faculty at Grinnell College, where he taught voice and conducted both the Grinnell Singers and the Grinnell Oratorio Society. Additionally, Ben served as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Monmouth College where he taught voice and conducted the Monmouth Chorale and chamber choir.

When not making music, Ben is most often hiking with his wife and his two dogs, and otherwise exploring Washington's many amazing trails, trying new craft beers, and binging good science fiction.

Our Student Assistant Conductor:



Julia Bezems is excited to join the Bellevue Chamber Chorus this season as the Student Assistant Conductor. Hailing from Allentown, PA, Julia holds Bachelors degrees in voice performance and computer science from the University of Michigan, and she is now active as a choral conductor and ensemble singer in the Seattle area. While at the University of Michigan, she performed frequently as a soprano with the *Chamber Choir* and as a soloist with the *University Baroque Orchestra*. Since moving to the Seattle area in 2022, she has sung with *Seattle Pro Musica*, *Opus 7 Vocal Ensemble*, and the *Northwest Symphony Orchestra*; and she will join *Radiance* vocal ensemble as a soprano this season.

She serves as the co-leader of the Seattle branch of *Crescendo North America*, an international organization for Christian musicians, and she freelances as a choral conductor for projects with Crescendo and other community engagements. Julia works as a software engineer at Microsoft, and she enjoys hiking and studying theology.

Our Accompanist:



Minju Kim, pianist, joins Bellevue Chamber Chorus this season. A native of South Korea, she has been active as a soloist, chamber musician and collaborative pianist. Minju won numerous awards, including Sidney Wright Accompanying Competition, Korean Music Association Competition, and Korea-Germany Brahms Association Competition. Her avid interest in chamber music led her to play at Bowdoin International Music Festival and Music Academy of the West as a fellow in collaborative piano. Also, she

served as a chamber pianist for the chamber groups playing piano trios in Heifetz International Music Institute. For the last two years, Minju was a lead collaborative pianist at Northwest Girlchoir. Currently, Minju is a collaborative pianist at Shoreline Community College, and frequently performs in concerts, radio programs and competitions with local musicians. Minju holds degrees in piano performance from Seoul National University in Korea (B.M.), Indiana University (M.M. and P.D.), and University of Texas in Austin (D.M.A), as well as a M.M in collaborative piano from New England Conservatory.

Bellevue Chamber Chorus

Director: Ben Luedcke

Student Assistant Conductor: Julia Bezems

Accompanist: Minju Kim, Piano

Soprano: Maria Bayer*, Julia Bezems, Kristine Bryan*, Debra Defotis, Kristine Gilreath, Melissa Malouf, Kathy McMillan, Katherine Threlkeld, Jane Wasell*

Alto: Elena Camerini, Claire Gajary, Arisha Kulshrestha, Anita Lenges, Rachel Macias*, Pratha Muthiah, Lauren Nelson, Karin Swenson-Moore, Kristen Wright*

Tenor: Patrick De Leon, Andrew Desmond, Imran Goychayev, Melanie Grube, Michael Grube, Jim Leininger*, Yan Smolyak, David Varner, Jamie Walch

Bass: Bill Baxter, Dennis Defotis, Mark Liebendorfer, Gabriel Malouf, James McTernan, Fabien Mousseau, Eric Mullen*, Jeff Pierce, John Schleg

* board member

Bellevue Chamber Chorus, founded in 1984, performs a minimum of three major concerts each season, encompassing a variety of choral literature from the classical standards and contemporary works to world music, Broadway hits, and vocal jazz. The Chorus often joins other ensembles in performances of major choral/orchestral works, such as Mozart's *Vespers* and *Requiem*, Faure's *Requiem*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms' *Requiem*, Rutter's *Mass of the Children*, and Ariel Ramirez' *Misa por la Paz y la Justicia*. The ensemble has premiered works by regional composers, including commissioned works for the Washington State Centennial Celebration, the grand opening of the Theatre at Meydenbauer Center, a special 20th anniversary season commissioned piece, *That Music Always Round Me*, by Seattle composer John Muehleisen, and co-commissions of pieces by Andre Thomas, Eric Whitacre and Ola Gjeilo. The Chorus has released three CDs: "Timeframes", "Retrospective", and "Christmas Visions, Winter Dreams".

Bellevue Chamber Chorus tours often and has performed in Carnegie Hall, various locations in Europe, the International Music Festival (2000) in Sydney, Australia, and twice at the invitational Kathaumixw International Choral Festival in Powell River, British Columbia, where they won first place in 2008 in the adult mixed chorus category. Other performances include the Leavenworth International Choral Festival, the international "Rolling Requiem" in memory of September 11th, as one of the regional choruses in the NEA sponsored American Masterpieces Choral Festival in Seattle, and in Kelowna, B.C. as part of the Okanogan Choral Society Series. The Chorus toured the south of France in the summer of 2017 and participated in the 22nd International Choir Festival in Provence, and the 9th International Choir Festival in Aveyron. The Chorus was selected as one of six choirs to perform in a special GSCC event "Welcome Home Morten Lauridsen" in October 2019.

Bellevue Chamber Chorus has active memberships in the Bellevue Downtown Association, Greater Seattle Choral Consortium (GSCC) and Chorus America. The Chorus is supported in part by the Bellevue Arts Commission and 4Culture.

Acknowledgements:

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Special thanks to: Richard Bulpin (community Board Member), all our singers and their families for their support, and all our volunteers who help make these concerts possible!

If you would like to volunteer with us to make the Chorus even better, we have openings in many of the positions above throughout the year, or for shorter term per-concert positions. Send an email expressing your interest to info@bellevuechamberchorus.org!

Join our email list and receive notifications of upcoming concerts and events! Sign up at our info table or visit www.bellevuechamberchorus.org and click on "Join Email List". You can also follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or X (@SingBellevue)!



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Katie Kelley

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Nov 28, 2023

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People show their generosity in a variety of ways during GivingTuesday — whether it's helping a neighbor, advocating for an issue, sharing a skill, or giving to causes, everyone has something to give and every act of generosity counts!

That said....ticket sales cover only a small portion of our costs, and that's why gifts from supporters are so important and appreciated! Please remember **Bellevue Chamber Chorus** as you plan your charitable donations this year. We hope to raise \$20,000 this concert season in individual donations to "Fund Our Future!" As a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, your tax-deductible gift will help us continue to provide excellent choral performances both live and online!

**BELLEVUE
CHAMBER CHORUS**
2023-2024 CONCERT SEASON

Why We Sing
Saturday, November 11, 2023, 7:30 pm
Sunday, November 12, 2023, 3:00 pm
YouTube premiere: Saturday, Nov. 25, 2023, 7 pm

Cry Out In Song
Saturday, March 9, 2024, 7:30 pm
Sunday, March 10, 2024, 3:00 pm
YouTube premiere: Saturday, March 23, 2024, 7 pm

*The Bellevue Spirit of Music
Past, Present, and Future*
Saturday, May 18, 2024, 7:30 pm
Sunday, May 19, 2024, 3:00 pm
YouTube premiere: Saturday, June 1, 2024, 7 pm

Locations:
Saturdays:
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Sundays:
Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Mercer Island



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