

## PROGRAM NOTES

The Concert Chorale opens our debut concert with contemporary composer Kirke Mechem's anthem **Sing All Ye Joyful**, which conveys the joy of singing inspired by the natural beauty that surrounds us. "**Alleluia**" by the famous 17th century composer Georg Philipp Telemann (1681-1767) sustains that sentiment with delightful melodies in a duet that emphasizes the beauty of the voices and instruments. The Chorale's opening set concludes with a lively traditional spiritual that makes figurative and literal reference to the Underground Railroad and deliverance from slavery into freedom. This choral duet is a combination of traditional spiritual texts set to exciting sounds of rhythmic layers and blues inflected melody and harmony.

**Ma navu** is a Hebrew folk song that we have interpreted with piano accompaniment. The text is timeless, but does seem appropriate in the dark of winter. The text of the traditional spiritual **Keep Your Lamps** refers to a sermon by Jesus in which he instructs his disciples to keep watch, not knowing the day of his return; in the context of the African American slave experience, these words also refer to the hope for freedom and the need to be watchful for the time to come.

American composer Rollo Dilworth has chosen three Langston Hughes texts for his **Dream Trilogy**, a choral song cycle that expresses hope in the power of dreams—dreams that are active, dreams that we have for our own lives and the lives of all people. The musical style of the compositions is rooted in blues and jazz. Rollo Dilworth teaches choral music education at North Park College in Chicago.

The VYO Chorus continues with **Take Me To The Water** by Mr. Dilworth, a spiritual-inspired piece that paraphrases two familiar spirituals and combines them in a contemporary gospel style. A pattern of call and response invigorates this musical texture, punctuated by strident and soulful chords sung by all voices together. The text describes freedom in the metaphors of spiritual freedom, in purification by water, and water as a means of escape. Both water and dreams hold powerful images that continue to resonate today.

**"And The Glory of the Lord"** and **Mayim** are similar text settings of rather different cultural context. Musically, both are dances, one from the 17th century court ballroom and the other an exuberant folk dance.

**The Five Hebrew Love Songs** of Eric Whitacre are poignant settings of original poetry by Hila Plitmann, the composer's wife. The poetry depicts transient romantic images and deeper interpersonal connections between two people. The music sets these ideas in sensitive melody and warm, colorful harmony contrasted with the boisterous rhythm of dance. Melody and melodic ornaments allude to idioms of Hebrew folk music, especially the melody in the men's parts of "*Light Bride*" and the women's melodies of the final movement.

The final portion of our concert includes the lyric and sumptuous **"Sure On This Shining Night"** by Morten Lauridsen and the traditional **Down By the Riverside**, which features our men's voices singing a walking bass line and women's voices in three-part harmony. The tune is historically a favorite for these reasons, and for the positive message of the words that is synonymous with the tune itself.

Our concert closes with two pieces sung by both ensembles together, both by contemporary American composer Jim Papoulis. Both compositions reveal the influence of popular and international musical styles. Arabic language and musical influence is particularly significant in **Kolenna sawa**. The composer writes "Kolenna sawa honors the tonality and rhythms [of the Levant region] while complementing them with a kind of western harmonic form – a melding of cultures through song. Can unity, respect, and care together be the light we will need on our path towards global understanding?" We hope that our program inspires interest and enjoyment in our music, and in our singing!

--Jeffrey Buettner