



J.D. BURNETT, Artistic Director

**Serenade
to
Music**

with

Simón Gollo, Violin

Eduardo Rojas, Piano

Saturday, February 5, 2022

7:30 pm

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

After more than ten months since learning I would inherit this incredible Orpheus mantle, I am pleased to welcome you to this evening's performance, *Serenade to Music*. Certainly, there is no better, no more appropriate theme for this occasion than MUSIC. For twenty-seven years, Orpheus has enriched the artistic landscape of North Texas with evocative programs and expert ensemble singing. As we enter the next chapter, we meditate tonight on the very thing that brings us together in so many measurable ways: choral singing. I am pleased to celebrate this abiding art form with you tonight, and I hope that you, the music lovers, will find great meaning and delight in these wonderful works. Thank you for joining us tonight, and please receive our warm invitation to make Orpheus Chamber Singers a continuing staple of your musical lives.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.D. Burnett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right from the end of the name.

J.D. Burnett
Artistic Director
February 5, 2022

Serenade to Music

J.D. Burnett, Conductor

Gitanjali Chants		Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)
Musica dei donum optimi		Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594)
	◆	
Hymn to St. Cecilia		Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)
	◆	
Why the Caged Bird Sings		Jake Runestad (b. 1986)
When the Violin		Reena Esmail (b. 1983)
	◆	
Serenade to Music		Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
	◆	
Que-ji-na Ching-Ching		Byung-Hee Oh (b. 1975)
Gropen		arr. Gjermund Larsen (b. 1981)
Ring Out, Wild Bells		Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)
From <i>The Passing of the Year</i>		



This concert is underwritten by a group of long-term supporters who believe in the music, mission, and future of Orpheus.

Gitanjali Chants

Ever in my life have I sought thee with my
songs.
It was they who led me from door to door,
and with them have I felt about me,
searching and touching my world.
It was my songs that taught me
all the lessons I ever learnt;
they showed me secret paths,
they brought before my sight
many a star on the horizons of my heart.
They guided me all the day long to the
mysteries
of the country of pleasure and pain,
and at last to what palace gate have they
brought me at the end of my journey?

Musica dei donum optimi

Musica Dei donum optimi
trahit homines, trahit deos:
Musica truces mollit animos
tristesque mentes erigit.
Musica vel ipsas arbores
et horridas movet feras
cunctisque solatia prestans.

Hymn to St. Cecilia

I.
In a garden shady this holy lady
With reverent cadence and subtle psalm,
Like a black swan as death came on
Poured forth her song in perfect calm:

Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)

You came down from your throne
and stood at my cottage door.
I was singing all alone in a corner,
and the melody caught your ear.
You came down and stood at my cottage
door.
Masters are many in our hall,
and songs are sung there at all hours.
But the simple carol of this novice struck at
your love.
One plaintive little strain
mingled with the great music of the world,
and with a flow'r for a prize;
You came down and stopped at my cottage
door.
~Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Orlando di Lasso (1532-1594)

Music, the gift of the supreme God,
draws men, draws gods;
music makes savage souls gentle
and uplifts sad minds;
music moves the trees themselves
and wild beasts,
affording solace to all.
~Anonymous

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

And by ocean's margin this innocent virgin
Constructed an organ to enlarge her prayer,
And notes tremendous from her great
engine
Thundered out on the Roman air.

Blonde Aphrodite rose up excited,
Moved to delight by the melody,
White as an orchid she rode quite naked
In an oyster shell on top of the sea;
At sounds so entrancing the angels dancing
Came out of their trance into time again,
And around the wicked in Hell's abysses
The huge flame flickered and eased their
pain.

II.

I cannot grow;
I have no shadow
To run away from,
I only play.

I cannot err;
There is no creature
Whom I belong to,
Whom I could wrong.

I am defeat
When it knows it
Can now do nothing
By suffering.

III.

O ear whose creatures cannot wish to fall,
O calm of spaces unafraid of weight,
Where Sorrow is herself, forgetting all
The gaucheness of her adolescent state,
Where Hope within the altogether strange
From every outworn image is released,
And Dread born whole and normal like a
beast
Into a world of truths that never change:
Restore our fallen day; O re-arrange.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and
startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

All you lived through,
Dancing because you
No longer need it
For any deed.

I shall never be
Different. Love me.

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and
startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.

O dear white children casual as birds,
Playing among the ruined languages,
So small beside their large confusing words,
So gay against the greater silences
Of dreadful things you did: O hang the
head,
Impetuous child with the tremendous brain,
O weep, child, weep, O weep away the
stain,
Lost innocence who wished your lover
dead,
Weep for the lives your wishes never led.

O cry created as the bow of sin
Is drawn across our trembling violin.

O weep, child, weep, O weep away the
stain.

O law drummed out by hearts against the
still
Long winter of our intellectual will.

That what has been may never be again.

O flute that throbs with the thanksgiving
breath
Of convalescents on the shores of death.

O bless the freedom that you never chose.

O trumpets that unguarded children blow
About the fortress of their inner foe.

O wear your tribulation like a rose.

Why the Caged Bird Sings

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;
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!

Blessed Cecilia, appear in visions
To all musicians, appear and inspire:
Translated Daughter, come down and
startle
Composing mortals with immortal fire.
~ *W. H. Auden (1907-1973)*

Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

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 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...
I know why the caged bird sings!
~from *Sympathy* by *Paul Laurence Dunbar*
(1872-1906)

When the Violin

When
The violin
Can forgive the past

It starts singing.

When the violin can stop worrying
About the future

You will become
Such a drunk laughing nuisance

Reena Esmail (b. 1983)

That God
Will then lean down
And start combing you into
Her
Hair.

When the violin can forgive
Every wound caused by
Others

The heart starts
Singing.

~ *Hafiz (1319-1390) from The Gift*
(tr. Daniel Ladinsky)

Serenade to Music

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this
bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of
music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the
night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb that thou
behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.
Come, ho! and wake Diana with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress'
ear,
And draw her home with music.
I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet
sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted... Music! hark!
It is your music of the house.
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by
day.
Silence bestows that virtue on it.
How many things by season season'd are.
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion,
And would not be awak'd.
(Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.)
~ *William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*
Text and translation provided courtesy of Oxford
Lieder (www.oxfordlieder.co.uk)

Que-ji-na Ching-Ching

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching
Ring que-ji-na ching-ching sounds good!

To the bright moon, ring que-ji-na ching-ching

To the bright moon in the universe,

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Putting a loom in the sky,

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Catching a carp for good fortunes,

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Go! Go! Let's go! ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Far away to be another world,

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Que-ji-na ching-ching, let's play

Go! Go! Let's go!

Feeling good and great

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Ring Out, Wild Bells

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,

The flying cloud, the frosty light:

The year is dying in the night;

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Ring, happy bells, across the snow:

The year is going, let him go;

Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,

For those that here we see no more;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,

Ring in redress to all mankind.

Byung-Hee Oh (b. 1975)

Hey! Listen to me

Sunset on the mountain,

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

No one can catch the sunset and the time

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

Wish to be tranquility of the life

Plenty of cereal crops in granary

Feeling good and great

Plenty of sparkling stars in the sky

Plenty of pebbles in the stream

Plenty of cones in the pinery

Plenty of bamboos joints in the bamboo
grove

Ehera di ya e he ya

Ring que-ji-na ching-ching

~*Traditional text*

Jonathan Dove (b. 1959)

Ring out false pride in place and blood,

The civic slander and the spite;

Ring in the love of truth and right,

Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,

Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;

Ring out the thousand wars of old,

Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,

The larger heart, the kindlier hand;

Ring out the darkness of the land,

Ring in the Christ that is to be.

~ *Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)*

Program notes by Cody Conway

We would like to extend a warm welcome to tonight's audience as well as to our new Artistic Director, J.D. Burnett. Both the Board of Directors and the ensemble thank you for your continued support of Orpheus as we enter this new era. *Serenade to Music* is just that—a celebration of music. As audiences and ensembles have traversed the limitations and demands of this pandemic, what better way to commemorate the hope of a new year and the resilience of the choral arts than to showcase music *about* music?

The first set of this evening's program evokes sounds of antiquity with *Gitanjali Chants* and *Musica Dei donum optimi*. "Gitanjali," literally meaning "Song Offering" in Bengali, is a collection of devotional poems by the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore, published in 1910. Texas composer Craig Hella Johnson has managed to meld an ancient church mode with modernized harmonies. The melody which is passed between the treble and low voices is composed in the less familiar dorian church mode, one of several medieval modes largely abandoned at the end of the Renaissance era. Placed atop sustained drones, the medieval characteristics of the piece beautifully match Tagore's otherworldly poetry. Orlando di Lasso's *Musica* also vacillates between church modes, creating a seamless flow of polyphony from the first few entrances until the final cadence. Lasso is regarded as the most significant composer of the Franco-Flemish Renaissance School—so popular, in fact, that many notable contemporaries would travel to train with him, such as the Gabriellis. His blending of Italian, Flemish, French, and German polyphonic styles culminated in over 530 motets, sixty masses, and countless other pieces of varying genres. This particular motet is perfectly representative of his sacred work; rather than incorporating too much chromaticism, a thread of beauty is maintained throughout as the text speaks of the power of music to move gods, men, minds, trees, and even beasts, "affording solace to all."

W.H. Auden penned *Hymn to St. Cecilia* for his young friend, Benjamin Britten. Auden adored the musical savant and intended the poem to be a parallel between the young composer's talents and the voice of the patron saint of music, Cecilia (Britten was also born on St. Cecilia's Day). Upon his return to England at the beginning of WWII, Britten chose Auden's poem to compose an ode to Cecilia, following a centuries-long British tradition. The poem and the piece must have meant a great deal to the young composer, as he rushed to re-write his manuscript on the ship after New York customs confiscated the piece for fear it was a type of war code. The piece mirrors the three main sections of Auden's poem: the first, a pastoral picture of Cecilia in her garden, singing softly to herself before crescendoing into "notes tremendous," evoking Aphrodite from the waters, causing angels to dance, and even easing sinners' pain in Hell. The tenors and sopranos chase one another in the middle section, like children refusing to mature. His setting follows the tradition of odes to Cecilia, including an invocation to the muse (repeated here as a refrain) as well as descriptions of multiple musical instruments, delivered by soloists in the third section.

Jake Runestad has quickly become one of America's leading young composers. His work is known for its lyricism, luminous textures, and careful selection of poetry. His pieces have already been featured in innumerable concerts and commercial albums by most of America's professional choirs. Of his 2014 commission, *Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Runestad writes:

Dunbar's text (from which Maya Angelou found the title for her famous autobiography), conveys the complexity of life as a post-Civil War black man born to previously enslaved parents. Musically, there is a tension between black and white pitches (as seen on a piano keyboard) as the work progresses through Dunbar's metaphor of a caged bird wishing to be free.

Reena Esmail is a renowned American-Indian composer whose unique voice has launched her into recent renown. Aside from collaborating with nearly twenty world-renowned professional choirs and symphonies in the past three years, she also follows composers such as Eric Whitacre and Morten Lauridsen, as Los Angeles Master Chorale's current Artist-in-Residence. Her cross-cultural music is known for melding Indian and Western styles, the former being showcased in the violin part and four solo voices in tonight's selection, *When the Violin*. The highly florid and embellished Hindustani *raag* (Indian melodic mode) can be easily identified, though still resting intimately within the more Western framework and harmonic structure of the piece.

Possibly the most frequently performed of any choral setting of Shakespeare, Ralph Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* was written for British conductor Henry Wood "in grateful recognition of his services to music." For his tribute, Vaughan Williams created a work that would feature sixteen well-known British singers who had had long associations with Wood, each of whom was given a brief solo in the piece. These sixteen singers took part in the premiere of the *Serenade* at Wood's Golden Jubilee concert at Royal Albert Hall, London, with Wood himself conducting. It is said that Sergei Rachmaninov (who was in attendance) was moved to tears by the emotional performance.

One of the world's finest hubs of choral excellence is found in South Korea, where there is an abundance of extremely skilled professional, community, and school choirs. Thankfully, the music of a new generation of talented Korean composers is finding its way into more American concert programming. Byung-Hee Oh has become a leading contemporary voice amongst world-renowned Korean female composers such as Hyo Won Woo and is currently Composer-in-Residence of The National Chorus of Korea. Her *Que-ii-na, Ching Ching* (Ching Ching, Joyful Sound) expands a traditional Korean folk melody into grand textures and striking rhythmic contrasts.

Gjermund Larsen was born into a family of accomplished Norwegian folk musicians. Both he and his brother were immersed in the style and eventually studied in the traditional

folk program at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo before being featured in a number of successful commercial recordings and collaborations. *Gropen* is a traditional dancing tune, translating to “the dark deep,” which refers to the low pitch of the fiddle in the first part of the piece. “Tralling” is a style of Norwegian folk singing that uses improvised vocal syllables instead of words and is inspired by formulas of fiddle playing; the singers are free to choose their own solutions. The piece also features a moment of overtone singing, a technique where the choir aims to create superficial pitches above the single note they are singing.

Primarily known for his relevant operas and engaging symphonic works, composer Jonathan Dove has been accredited for bringing modern audiences back to the British performance halls. In fact, his 1998 opera, *Flight*, gained international acclaim and has been performed more times in the past two decades than any other opera in Great Britain. His setting of Alfred Tennyson’s *Ring out, wild bells* is the final movement of his choral cycle, *The Passing of the Year*. The cycle is dedicated to the memory of his mother and explores the beguiling senses of the passing seasons and, of course, the stages of life and its inevitable ending. The excitement of clashing bells in the extremely challenging piano part is soon matched by various voice parts exclaiming “Ring out” individually. The various bell sounds throughout the piece eventually culminate in multiple overwhelming and soul-cleansing moments with the full chorus.



J.D. Burnett was named Orpheus’s second Artistic Director in March 2021 and assumed the role on January 1, 2022. He enjoys a varied career as a conductor, singer, and teacher. He is the founding Artistic Director of Kinnara, Atlanta’s premier professional chamber choir. Additionally, Burnett is Associate Professor of Music and Associate Director of Choral Activities at the University of Georgia Hugh Hodgson School of Music, where he conducts the University Chorus, Men’s Glee Club, Women’s Glee Club, and UGA Choral Project, teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in conducting and choral literature, and serves as chair of the conducting area. He is also the Director of Music at Oconee Street United Methodist Church in Athens, GA.

Formerly, he served as Assistant Director of the Dallas Symphony Chorus, conductor of the New Jersey Youth Chorus Young Men’s Ensemble, Associate Conductor of the Masterwork Chorus of New Jersey, and Acting Director of Choral Activities at Montclair State University. Earlier posts include Interim Director of Choral Activities at San Jose State University, Artistic Director of the New Jersey Chamber Singers, Music Director of the

Houston Masterworks Chorus, and Founder of Men's Consort Houston. He also served as Choral Editor at McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Burnett did undergraduate study at Stanford University and Oklahoma State University. He holds advanced degrees in choral conducting from Westminster Choir College and the University of North Texas.

As a professional choral singer, Burnett has performed and recorded with the Stillwater Chamber Singers, Cantare Houston, Fuma Sacra, Robert Shaw Festival Singers, Choir of Trinity Church Wall Street, Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and Conspirare.



Colombia's celebrated classical music star, virtuoso pianist **Eduardo Rojas**, is renowned for his delicate touch, colorful tone, and the deep musicality with which he delivers his powerful, fiery renditions of European and PanAmerican repertoire.

As a soloist, Eduardo Rojas has performed works by Beethoven, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Liszt, Grieg, and others with the National Symphony Orchestra of Colombia, the Bogotá Philharmonic, Valle Philharmonic (Cali, Colombia), EAFIT University Symphony Orchestra (Medellín, Colombia), the Panamá National Symphony Orchestra (Panama City), the American Wind Symphony (Pennsylvania), New Philharmonic Orchestra of Irving (Texas), the Great Lakes Symphony Orchestra (Michigan), and the Manitowoc Symphony Orchestra (Wisconsin). He has represented his native country at various music festivals in Bolivia, Ecuador, Puerto Rico and has been a featured guest artist at the Popayán International Music Festival in Colombia and at the celebrations for Chopin's 200th birthday at the renowned Luis Angel Arango Concert Hall in Bogotá, Colombia. His recital programs span the gamut of classical European as well as North and South American composers. His uniquely authentic renditions of works by Ástor Piazzolla, Hector Villalobos, George Gershwin and others are always highlights of his solo recitals.

In addition to his concertizing and recording schedule, Eduardo Rojas devotes time to support programs for music education and cultural exchange between North and South America.

Born in Barranquilla, Colombia, Eduardo Rojas began taking piano lessons with his father, Eduardo Rojas, at the age of five. At age thirteen he entered the University of Cauca where he completed his studies under the tutelage of Uruguayan pianist Manfred Gerhardt. In 2005

he was awarded a full scholarship to Texas Christian University (TCU) in Fort Worth, Texas. Mr. Rojas received his Artist Diploma in 2009 and his Master in Piano Performance in 2011. His piano teachers included Harold Martina, Veda Kaplinsky, Joseph Kalichstein, José Feghali, and Steve Harlos.



Recognized as a multifaceted and charismatic musician, Swiss-Venezuelan violinist **Simón Gollo** enjoys a successful international career as a soloist, chamber musician, and conductor. At the same time, he is a committed recording artist, artistic director, and pedagogue.

Simón Gollo has appeared on countless stages across Europe, Asia, and the American continent from Canada to Chile. His long career has led him to perform at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall (New York), Cadogan Hall (London), the 92nd Street Y's Kaufmann Concert Hall (New York), the National Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Bolívar Hall (London), the Teatro Teresa Carreño (Caracas), the Auditorio Blas Galindo (Mexico City), the Auditorio Manuel de Falla (Granada), and the Teatro Mayor (Bogotá), and for renowned organizations such as the BBC Proms Festival, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and the Chamber Music Society of Detroit.

As a soloist, Simón Gollo has performed the greatest violin concertos with prestigious orchestras such as the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela, Filarmónica de Bogotá, Orquesta Sinfónica de Salta (Argentina), Central Ohio Symphony (USA), Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio (USA), and the Orquesta de Caxias do Sul (Brazil), under the baton of prominent conductors such as Conrad van Alphen, Theodore Kuchar, and Carlos Izcaray. He obtained the Fundación Cisneros 2012 scholarship to attend the Aspen Music Festival, where he took lessons from renowned professors Alex Kerr and Naoko Tanaka. He received his musical education in Switzerland under the tutelage of his mentors Anne Bauer, Gyula Stuller, Gabor Takacs, and Patrick Genet.

Simón Gollo is a gifted and committed pedagogue who keeps a very busy schedule teaching both violin and chamber music. He is an assistant professor of violin at New Mexico State University (NMSU), and he joined the faculty roster at the California Orchestra Institute in 2020. In addition, he was appointed conductor of the New Mexico State University Philharmonic in 2016.

Simón Gollo is a recording artist for the international recording label IBS Classical.

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