JULY 25

TUESDAY, JULY 25 :: 7:30 PM

Chanticleer
Cortez Mitchell, Gerrod Pagenkopf*, Kory Reid, Bradley Sharpe, Logan Shields, Adam Ward, countertenor
Vineel Garisa Mahal*, Matthew Mazzola, Andy Van Allsburg, tenor
Andy Berry*, Zachary Burgess, Matthew Knickman, baritone and bass
Tim Keeler, Music Director

LABYRINTHS

I

VIRGO DEI THRONO DIGNA
Johannes Tinctoris (ca.1435–1511)

IN EXITU ISRAEL
Josquin des Prez (ca.1450–1521)

TU PAUPERUM REFUGIUM
Anonymous (ca.1504)

II

III. ALL NIGHT† FROM THE LOTUS LOVERS
Stephen Paulus (1949–2014)
Commissioned for Chanticleer in 2011 by Mary Rodgers and Hank Guettel

LOPIN’ ALONG THROUGH THE COSMOS
Judee Sill (1944–1979), arr. Adam Ward

III. STRANGE HOW WE CAN WALK (IN L.A.)† FROM TRADE WINDS
Zhou Tian (b. 1981)
Commissioned by Chanticleer in 2019
and funded in honor of William Fred Scott by Scott Beth and Keith Jantzen

III

OH DAEDALUS, FLY AWAY HOME
Trevor Weston (b.1967)

GOD’S GONNA TROUBLE
Traditional, arr. Jonathan Woody

Program continues on next page
PROGRAM NOTES

IV

BLOW, BLOW THOU WINTER WIND†
George Walker (1922–2018)

STORMY WEATHER†

BOTH SIDES NOW†
Joni Mitchell (b.1943), arr. Vince Peterson

III. HER BEACON—HAND BECKONS FROM TO THE HANDS
Caroline Shaw (b.1982)

CALLING MY CHILDREN HOME†
Doyle Lawson (b.1944), Charles Walker (1935–2004),

VI

THE ROAD HOME
Stephen Paulus

MY WAY HOME
Christopher H. Harris (b.1985)

GOIN’ HOME TO GOD
Traditional Spiritual, arr. Steve Barnett

ROCK A MY SOUL†
Traditional Spiritual, arr. Jennings

I’LL FLY AWAY
(1928–2010), arr. Tim Keeler

†These pieces have been recorded by Chanticleer.

*Andy Berry occupies The Eric Alatorre Chair given by Peggy Skornia. Vivell Gorina Mahal occupies The Tenor Chair, given by an Anonymous Donor. Gerrrd Pagenkopf occupies The Ning G. Mercer Chair for the Preservation of the Chanticleer Legacy, given by Ning and Stephen Mercer.

This concert is made possible by contributing sponsors Jill and Stephen Bell.

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Labyrinths twist and turn. They wind and bend, meander and mosey. Exploring a labyrinth can be scary, but it can also be meditative, and sometimes even healing. A labyrinth is not a maze. Labyrinths are “unicursal,” meaning they have only one path, while mazes branch in different directions. To walk a labyrinth is to admire the journey. Left and right, forward and backward, how did you end up here today? And what lies around the next corner? Life is one long labyrinth. Let’s explore it together.

Our program starts with "Virgo Dei trionge digna" by the Renaissance composer and music theorist Johannes Tinctoris. This brief singer’s prayer is a send-off for our journey. "In exitu Israel," by Josquin des Prez, is a setting of Psalm 113, which retells the story of the Jewish exodus from Egypt—a journey full of twists and turns. The text includes surreal images of parting seas and shifting mountains as the travelers make their way to the promised land. Psalm 113 is typically set to the tonus peregrinus, and Josquin follows that tradition here. This wandering (or "pilgrim") tone is unique among psalm tones because the recitation note changes in the middle of each verse, thus acting as a musical representation of the text it sets.

"Tu pauperum refugium" presents a glimmer of hope for those wandering in the desert. Here, God is the "refuge of the poor" and "the hope of exiles." The music’s stark and sparse beauty comes, in part, from its use of the Phrygian mode, which lends the work a feeling of stasis and eternity. "Tu pauperum refugium" is often ascribed to Josquin. Indeed, it is similar to other works by the famous composer ("Mille regretz" comes to mind). However, this motet first appeared in print in 1504 without any composer attribution.

Wandering through life can be lonely without companionship, whether that be friends, family or the divine. Written for Chanticleer in 2011 by the GRAMMY Award-winning composer Stephen Paulus, "All night" captures the extreme emptiness and hollowness of a suddenly solitary existence. "Lopin' along through the cosmos," by Judee Sill, takes a more pragmatic view of life’s ebbs and flows, a view which she arrives at through incredible self-awareness and a certain kind of mysticism—"I’ll tell you a secret: however we are is okay." Born in California and active throughout the 1970s as a singer-songwriter, Sill’s Baroque-infused harmonies and carefully chosen lyrics give her music a timelessness and depth that maintains its relevance now, some five decades later. Sill died in 1979 from a drug overdose at the age of 35.

The GRAMMY-nominated, Chinese-American composer Zhou Tian wrote "Strange how we can walk (in L.A.)" for Chanticleer in 2019. The text, by Seth Michelson, describes the contradictions inherent in life’s ups and downs. A day, just like any other day, can contain good news or bad news. Zhou Tian captures the contradictory frivolity of disaster with a pop-inflected interlude squeezed between an intense and rhythmically driven beginning and end. W.H. Auden describes a similar disconnect in his poem, "Musée des Beaux Arts." In it, he muses on the fall of Icarus, a disaster almost unworthy of note:

[J]n Breughel’s Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; [...] the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky, had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

Icarus’s fateful flight too close to the sun is often taken as a warning on the dangers of hubris. However, there’s much more to the myth than that, and a brief retelling will help us understand the next piece on the program. According to Greek mythology, Daedalus (the father of Icarus) built a labyrinth for King Minos of Crete to imprison the half-man, half-bull Minotaur. After Daedalus helped the hero Theseus kill the Minotaur, King Minos imprisoned Daedalus and Icarus in the very labyrinth Daedalus had built. Daedalus crafted wings of feathers and wax so he and his son might escape. And escape they did, though with disastrous consequences.

Robert Hayden, the first Black Poet Laureate of the United States, references this myth in his 1943 poem, “Oh Daedalus, fly away home.” Daedalus’s prison, in this context, is slavery. Hayden describes a drifting Georgia night with mournful reminiscences of Africa. Flying, either physical or metaphorical, is the means of escape back home. An epigraph precedes the poem: "Lots uh slaves wut wuz brung ouvh from Africa could fly ... Dey dohn like it heah ... and go back to Africa ..." Hayden cites this as the Legend of the Flying African. The origin of that myth, like all myths, is uncertain, but
the legend gained some notoriety after the Igbo Landing mass suicide in 1803, an event in which a group of slaves killed themselves by drowning rather than being forced into slavery. Flight, in this sense, becomes an allegory for escape through death. Trevor Weston captures the heat and sweat of the Georgia night, the stomping juba dance, the memories of Africa, and that longed-for escape with harmonies and scales as lush and dense as the Georgia pines themselves. Dr. Weston is the chair of the music department at Drew University where he teaches theory and composition.

"God's gonna trouble" is a slave song medley arranged by Jonathan Woody featuring both "Follow the drinking gourd" and "Wade in the water." The drinking gourd in the first song represents the big dipper, a helpful northward guide on the underground railroad, while "wade in the water" is an instruction to get off the road and into the water to avoid sniffing dogs and slave catchers. The biblical references in the latter song bring us back to where our program began: the Jordan River is the same river referenced in Psalm 113 that the Israelites crossed in order to reach the promised land. The arranger, Jonathan Woody, is a "charismatic" and "riveting" (New York Times) bass-baritone and composer living in New York City, whose compositions have been performed by the Handel and Haydn Society and Les Délices. As a soloist he has performed with, among others, the Boston Early Music Festival, Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, Apollo's Fire and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street.

The next three pieces give us different perspectives on the storms and challenges life throws our way. The text for "Blow, blow thou winter wind" comes from William Shakespeare's As you like it and is set here by Washington, D.C. native George Walker, who was the first Black American to win the Pulitzer Prize for music. George Arlen wrote "Stormy Weather" in 1933, and the vocal jazz legend Gene Puerling arranged it specifically for Chanticleer in 1988. Rounding out the set, Joni Mitchell's iconic "Both sides now" reminds us that sometimes all you need to deal with those storms is a change of perspective.

After life's twists and turns and ups and downs, the labyrinth ends somewhere we might call home. Home can mean many things: a return, an end, or a new beginning. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw wrote "Her beacon-hand beckons" to directly address the meaning of "home" in America today. Excerpted from her larger work, To the Hands, "Her beacon-hand" is a reimagining of the Emma Lazarus poem engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty. The motherly figure of acceptance described by Lazarus and Shaw could be the narrator in "Calling my children home." Joseph H. Jennings, Chanticleer's music director emeritus, arranged this piece for the ensemble in 2002.

"The road home," by Stephen Paulus, has become a favorite among choirs all over the world. The melody comes from The Southern Harmony Songbook of 1835 although the words, by Michael Dennis Browne, are new. The sentiment is one of joy and solace in belonging. "My way home," on the other hand, is more somber. Composer Christopher H. Harris wrote the text himself in response to the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012. He takes the perspective of one of the children and implores us to "mourn me with grace" for "I have found my way home." It is a message of comfort in the middle of incredible darkness. Dr. Harris is the director of choral activities at Arkansas Tech University.

Program notes by Tim Keeler

ABOUT THE ARTISTS
Access artist biographies via our digital program book.
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