



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Ensemble Concert | Saturday, February 8, 2025 | 7:30 p.m.
Margot and Bill Winspear Hall - Murchison Performing Arts Center

A Cappella Choir and Orpheus Chamber Singers

A Cappella Choir
Allen Hightower, conductor

Spiritus

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf,
BWV 226 (1729) Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685–1750)
Text from Romans, Martin Luther
Daeun Kim, organ

Come to the Woods (2015) Jake Runestad
(b. 1986)
Text adapted from John Muir
Daeun Kim, piano

Veni, Sancte Spiritus (2025) Marques L. A. Garrett
(n.d.)
Text from the Latin Mass for Pentecost Sunday

-INTERVAL-

Program two hundred ninety-five of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

Orpheus Chamber Singers

J.D. Burnett, artistic director

- Kanarbik, from Sügismaastikud
(Autumn Landscapes) (1964) Veljo Tormis
(1930–2017)
Text by Vivi Luik
- O Clap Your Hands (1622) Orlando Gibbons
(1583–1625)
Text from Psalm 47
- O Sapientia (1998) Paweł Łukaszewski
(b. 1968)
Text from Advent Antiphons
- Close[r], now (2021) Ayanna Woods
(b. 1992)
- So Breaks the Sun (2017) Shavon Lloyd
(b. 1997)
Text by Ben Jonson
- Rotaļa (1991) Juris Karlsons
(b. 1948)
Text by Janis Rainis

Program Notes

A Cappella Choir | *Spiritus*

The Latin term "spirare," meaning "breathe," conjures images of wind, breath and the Holy Spirit. In creating this program, we have intentionally chosen repertoire whose texts draw together these concepts.

From the very first phrase of Bach's **Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf**, the spirit descends with energetic urgency. Vivacious sixteenth-note melismas are passed between the voices of the double choir texture, intended to represent the fiery winds of the Holy Spirit. The genius of Bach's artistry is on further display through a sonic depiction of "inexpressible groans," in which he uses angular melodic lines and dissonant intervals to create a ghostly, haunting effect. The ending chorale summarizes and moralizes on the text, as the spirit guides us on a militant march toward eternal life.

Come to the Woods is an exploration of the spirit of nature. Jake Runestad compiled the text from the writings of John Muir, who was inspired by the transcendent natural landscape of California's Yosemite Valley. The music meditates on Muir's celebrations of nature through stunningly beautiful choral harmonies and pensive piano solos. Mountain winds, bracing windstorms, and a wild sea of pines invigorate the soul and lead us to peace and rest.

Commissioned by the UNT A Cappella Choir and receiving its world premiere performance tonight, we conclude with UNT professor Marques L. A. Garrett's latest work, **Veni, Sancte Spiritus**. Dr. Garrett used the Negro spiritual "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" as a source of melodic content, fusing this song tradition with the Latin sequence for Pentecost Sunday. The spirit first descends as the breath of heaven through wind sounds created by the choir. Lively mixed-meter rhythms alternate with peaceful homophony, creating a variety of images of heavenly light. As the music builds to its conclusion, the texture and harmony become increasingly complex, leading a crescendo to the brilliantly thrilling final chord.

Orpheus Chamber Singers (notes by Cody Conway)

Estonia's rich national history of singing was stifled during Soviet occupation in the 20th Century. Veljo Tormis (along with Estonian contemporaries like Arvo Pärt and Cyrillus Kreek) felt charged to preserve his country's folk and nationalistic music, dedicating his career to arranging a substantial collection of *laulud* (traditional songs). **Kanarbik** from *Sügismaastikud* (Autumn Landscapes) highlights the elemental aspects of the Estonian *laulud* with bucolic evocations and a sense of longing for the past.

O clap your hands is one of Orlando Gibbons' larger scale anthems. Premiered in 1622 during his Doctoral ceremony at Oxford, the setting of Psalm 47 exemplifies the "learned devices" of 16th-century counterpoint, passing phrases of imitation between two choirs. Particularly amusing is the varying length of these imitations, the longest being "God is gone up with a merry noise," contrasting the shortest, "Sing praises." It is easy to imagine these volleys between the two choirs, facing one another in the vast Westminster Abbey where Gibbons served as senior organist.

O Sapientia is the first of seven Advent Antiphons composed between 1995–9, the texts of which are most familiar today as the seven verses of the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." The core of Polish composer Paweł Łukaszewski's musical language is what he calls "renewed tonality"—the use of common-practice harmony augmented with non-functional progressions between distantly-connected triads. This innovative mode of harmonic expression (which is on full display in the slow sections of this piece) coupled with his dynamic metrical patterns bends the ear across unexpected turns in his music. A slower-moving but extremely high melody surrounding a quick ostinato forms the most sonically-charged of his antiphons.

American ensemble, Chanticleer, commissioned **Close[r], now** by Ayanna Woods in 2021. The source text for the piece is an L.A. Times editorial from March 2020, charging theaters and performing arts venues to "close, now." Woods extracted letters, words, and phrases from the article to create an erasure poem, a modern poetic genre. The result is a piece that confronts the changes we had to make to connect to one another during the pandemic. The GRAMMY-nominated piece uses choppy and pointillistic fragments as well as sounds of mumbling behind masks before culminating in a final post-Covid resolution: "come back to life."

American composer and Baritone, Shavon Lloyd, was the winner of the inaugural Orpheus Chamber Singers Student Composition Contest in 2019. Since then, he has continued to compose, conduct, and pursued a Masters in Vocal Performance at The Juilliard School. Lloyd speaks of his interpretation of Ben Johnson's poem from the early 17th-century as a transition from Winter to Spring, darkness to light, or even sadness to happiness. **So Breaks the Sun** celebrates this binary, contrasting slower, lush sections with a hopeful, driving ostinato that surfaces throughout the piece.

Neslegtāis gredzens is a cycle of three Latvian folk pieces by Juris Karlsons. **Rotāļa** means "the unclosed ring" and refers to a children's dancing game in which the group joins hands and forms a ring or circle. The piece is built around an extremely fast pattering of "digi-digi-dogo-di" like the sounds of an engine. Separate parts are heard shouting "Vidu!" meaning "to the middle!" as an instruction for the next participant to take their place in the middle of the circle. The piece captures the childlike playfulness and playground pandemonium with a whirlwind of extremely quick text and sixteen parts.

Texts and Translations

Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf

Text from Romans 8:26-27 & Martin Luther (1524)

Translation by Francis Browne (2008)

Der geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf,
The spirit comes to help our weakness,

Den wir Wissen nicht was wir beten sollen, wie sich's gebühret;
For we do not know what we should pray, as we ought to pray;

Sondern der Geist selbst vertritt uns aufs best emit unaussprechlichem Seufzen.
But the spirit itself pleads for us in the best way with inexpressible groans.

Der aber die Herzen forschet, der Weiss, was des Geiste sinn sei;
Denn er vertritt die Heiligen nach dem, das Gott gefällt.
But he who searches our hearts knows what the Spirit means
since he pleads for the saints in the way that pleases God.

Du heilige Brunst, süsser Trost
Nun hilf uns, frölich und getrost
In deinem Dienst beständig bleiben,
Die Trübsal uns nicht abtreiben.
O Herr, durch dein Kraft uns bereit
Und stark des Fleisches Blödigkeit,
Das wir hie ritterlich ringen,
Durch Tod und Leben zu dir dringen.
Halleluja, halleluja.

You sacred warmth, sweet consolation,
now help us joyful and comforted
in your service, always to remain
do not let sorrow drive us away!
O Lord, through your power make us ready
and strengthen the feebleness of our flesh
so that we may bravely struggle
through life and death to reach you!

Come to the Woods

Text from the writings of John Muir (1838-1914), adapted by the composer

Another glorious day, the air as delicious
to the lungs as nectar to the tongue.

The day was full of sparkling sunshine,
and at the same time enlivened with one of
the most bracing wind storms.

The mountain winds bless the forests with love.
They touch every tree, not one is forgotten.

When the storm began to sound,
I pushed out into the woods to enjoy it.
I should climb one of the trees for a wider look.

The sounds of the storm were glorious with
wild exuberance of light and motion.
Bending and swirling backward and forward, round and round,
in this wild sea of pines.

The storm-tones died away, and turning toward the east,
I beheld the trees, hushed and tranquil.
The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say,
"Come to the woods, for here is rest."

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Text from the sequence for the Masses of Pentecost Sunday

Veni, Sancte Spiritus, et emitte caelitus lucis tuae radium.	Come, Holy Spirit and send out from heaven the ray of your light.
In labore requies, In aestu temperies, In fletu solatium.	In labor, rest, In heat, temperateness, In tears, solace.
O lux beatissima, reple cordis intima tuorum fidelium.	O most blessed light, fill the inmost heart of your faithful.

Kanarbik, from Sügismaastikud (Autumn Landscapes)

Text by Vivi Luik (b. 1946)

Kurb lilla kanarbik meeletult lõõskab päikese vimane virgendus silmis, Muidu kõik on kui ikka, need samad on nurmed, need samad on teed, ainult nende peal põleb, maailma surune leek.	Sad purple heather bell frantically blazes Capturing aftermost flickering sunlight. And all else is as ever, As ever the meadows. As ever the roads, Only over them burning, Flaring a planet a flame.
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O Clap Your Hands

Text from Psalm 47

O clap your hands together, all ye people;
O sing unto God with the voice of melody.
For the Lord is high and to be feared; he is the great King of all the earth.
He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.
He shall choose out an heritage for us, even the worship of Jacob, whom he loved.

God is gone up with a merry noise, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet.
O sing praises, sing praises unto our God: O sing praises unto the Lord our King.
For God is the King of all the earth: sing ye praises with the understanding.
God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon his holy seat.
For God, which is highly exalted, doth defend the earth, as it were with a shield.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

O Sapientia

Text from Advent Antiphons

O Sapientia, quae ex ore Altissimi prodiisti Attingens a fine usque ad finem Fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia: Veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiae.	O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender care: Come and show your people the way to salvation.
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Close[r], now

Text by Ayanna Woods

the point of ease is a window.
Dream—fathom—
hone the dexterity of love.
the mask/ a [path] through
come back/ come back to life.

So Breaks the Sun

Text by Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

So breaks the sun earth's rugged chains,
Wherein rude winter bound her veins;
So grows both stream and source of price,
That lately fettered were with ice.
So naked trees get crisped heads,
And colored coats the roughest meads,
And all get vigor, youth, and spright,
That are but looked on by his light.

Rotaja

Text by Janis Rainis (1865-1929)

Vidu! Vi!	To the middle!
Viena naca otra gaja,	One came, the other went,
Viena laid cita maja, vidu!	One lets go, another waves, vidu!
Navel tverta sniegta roka,	The outstretched hand is not yet grabbed,
jau tu ligo, lidz ieks loca, vidu!	You already swing along in a circle, vidu!
Vala, vala rota dienas, surpu,	Freely, freely the days spin,
turpu irst un sienas, vidu!	Hither, thither, part and join your hands,
Irst un sienas tevi rokas,	Further joining, further swaying, vidu!
Talak sienas, talak lokas, vidu!	Freely freely swirl around!
Navel tverta sniegta roka,	
jau tu ligo, lidz ieks loca, vidu!	
Vala, vala rota dienas, surpu,	
turpu irst un sienas, vidu!	
Vala, vala rota!	
Vidu!	

Ensemble Personnel

A Cappella Choir

Soprano

Lauren Abell
Sarah Barrow
Julianna Carden
Victoria Cerda
Rachel Cunningham
Kayla Flores
Sara Foshée-Knoy
Emma Garcia
Sorrel McCarthy
Katie Grace Stephenson
Maryn West

Tenor

Piero Centurion
Mason Clarkson
James Dickens II
Gavin Godbey
Marquis Xavier McBride
Robby Napoli
Rudy Polk
Tyler Warwas
Moisés Ybaben-Burciaga

Alto

Julia Amundson
Abi Bahng
Nadia Cloud
Kathryn Davidson
Delia Esparza
Pebbles Guest
Isa Jovanovic
Ris Kemp
Talitha Murphy
Diane Tiscareño
Jade Wesley
Eleanor Williams
Kristina Wueger

Bass

Ben Bassett
Michael Binkley
Colin Busch-Kennedy
Isaac Carlin
Matt Carlson
Ely Eckles
Christopher Gray
Jaden Jackson-Cooper
Joshua LaPrade
Eric Martinez
Demetrius Robinson Jr.
Noah Wyckoff

Orpheus Chamber Singers

Soprano

Julie Bowdren
Anna Clarkson
Taylor Fenner
Jacki Miller
Kori Miller
Caitlin Wells
Molechat
Haley Sicking

Alto

Katrina Burggraf
Rashaad Calaham
Hasoo Eun
Jenna Hernandez
McLean
Lauren Harrison
Maiya Williams

Tenor

Johnny Brown
Justin Kroll
Eric Lewis
Travis Lowery
Barrett Radziun
Jeremy Rohwer

Bass

Hawkins Burns
Cody Conway
Matt Glass
David Grogan
De'Evin Johnson
Connor Lidell
Hastings Reeves

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