

43RD SEASON *connections*



Sacred & Profane, a chamber chorus presents
Nearness of You: Staying Connected

Virtual Concert Broadcast | Saturday, June 5, 2021 | 6pm

PROGRAM

The Nearness of You

Hoagy Carmichael & Ned Washington; arr. Kirby Shaw
Jeremy Davidson, *baritone*

A Way to Be with You

Dale Trumbore
Edna Yeh and Daniel Morrison, *soloists*

Natt över jorden

Karin Rehnqvist

Connected

Brian Tate
with Oakland Youth Chorus Chamber Singers, directed by La Nell Martin

Meditation

Karen Siegel
Gretchen Wallacker, *mezzo-soprano*

Kung Liljekonvalje: Tribute to Michael Jordin

David Wikander
Barry Stone, videography

Cells/Planets

Erika Lloyd; arr. Vince Peterson

Rachael Rouché, *soprano*



PROGRAM NOTES & TEXTS

From Artistic Director, Rebecca P.N. Seeman:

What a year it's been! We've confronted health, racial, environmental, and economic crises that have left us bruised but determined to create real change. We are eager to reconnect and see our friends and family face to face, and to create new connections to forge a better future for everyone, including those who are often barred from the advantages that others of us enjoy. This concert is dedicated to that – connecting with those we already know and love as well as forging new bonds in our communities and across our increasingly small globe.

As we begin to heal in the warmth of the spring sun, longer days, and the blooming flowers, we remember the people we lost. The Sacred and Profane community has experienced the full arch of life this year – One baby was born in March and another one is on the way next month, two singers who met in our choir were recently married (they're the ones who are expecting...), members' elderly parents have struggled or have died, and we lost our longtime beloved bass, Michael Jordin, whom we will forever remember for his remarkable way of connecting with everyone through kindness, food, and of course music.

This third concert in our remote season includes three new virtual choir videos (compilations of singers' individual videos woven together by my partner Pete Gontier to tell beautiful cinematic stories) and three remote pieces, where we sing together in real time online, embracing the latency, or lag time, that comes with making music on Zoom. We've been grateful for the opportunity to come together on Monday nights as we always have to talk, connect, and sing, even though we are all in our own homes. And we are bursting with excitement to begin singing together and perform for our audiences in person next year!



Hoagy Carmichael, Arr. Kirby Shaw: *The Nearness of You*
Text: Ned Washington

*It's not the pale moon that excites me
That thrills and delights me, oh no
It's just the nearness of you
It isn't your sweet conversation
That brings this sensation, oh no
It's just the nearness of you
When you're in my arms and I feel you so close to me
All my wildest dreams come true
I need no soft lights to enchant me
If you'll only grant me the right
To hold you ever so tight
And to feel in the night the nearness of you.*

The Nearness of You, Hoagy Carmichael and Ned Washington's classic that was debuted by the Glenn Miller Band in 1939, is the perfect way to introduce our concert – just imagine that first hug with your best friend, your grandmother, even someone you've never met before! I love Kirby Shaw's romantic arrangement for tenors and basses, and especially the way our singers weave their way through the chromatic melodies to reach out to "feel the nearness of you."



Dale Trumbore: *A Way to Be with You*
Text: Dale Trumbore

*It doesn't matter if the timing's right,
I'll find a way to be with you.
And on the days when nothing's going right, I'll find a way to be with you.*

*And if I'm honest
I don't know what to say, except I'm here to stay.*

*When it's dark and you can't sleep at night, I'll find a way to be with you.
And when it feel like there's no end in sight, I'll find a way to be with you.*

Nothing is easy when you are far away but that will change some day.

*When our days are ours and time is free, You'll find your way home to me.
And after all these hours are done and through,*

I'll find my way home to you.

When the coronavirus pandemic made it impossible for us to sing together in the same place, we were grateful to composers like Dale Trumbore for creating beautiful works for us to sing together online from our remote locations. We had planned to present Dale's moving work for choir and piano, *In the Middle*, in March, and when we had to cancel that concert I was happy that we could still explore this gifted Los Angeles-based composer's music. We brought you her remote work *I Hope You're Doing Well* in December, and we're pleased to present her *A Way to Be With You* for remote choir tonight.



Karin Rehnqvist: *Natt över jorden (Night On Earth)*

Text: Erik Blomberg

<i>Nu är det natt över jorden.</i>	<i>Now it is night on earth.</i>
<i>Darrande stjärna gläns.</i>	<i>The trembling stars shine.</i>
<i>Världarna vandra så fjärran.</i>	<i>The worlds wander so far away.</i>
<i>Mörkret är utan gräns.</i>	<i>Darkness is limitless.</i>
<i>Marken och mullen och mörkret,</i>	<i>Ground and earth and darkness,</i>
<i>Varför älskar jag dem?</i>	<i>Why do I love them?</i>
<i>Stjärnorna vandra så fjärran.</i>	<i>The stars wander so far away.</i>
<i>Jorden är människans hem.</i>	<i>The earth is the home of humanity.</i>

Sacred and Profane has been performing the music of Swedish composer Karin Rehnqvist since I first began with the choir in 2004. I will be forever grateful that I discovered Karin back in the 1990s when I was researching Swedish music for women's choir and was led to this remarkable, exciting composer. We've remained friends and colleagues, and Sacred and Profane has presented multiple US premieres of her works. Performing her *Songs From the North*, commissioned for our 40th anniversary in 2018, was one of the great highlights of my musical life. Karin was the subject of our first Composer Connections segment in October 2020, and I encourage you to hear her music and see my interview at sacredprofane.org/karin-rehnqvist.

Natt över jorden (Night on Earth) is the first in the two-part cycle, *Sånger ur jorden (Songs From the Earth)*. The text by the poet Erik Blomberg addresses Karin's attraction to poetry that examines the themes of light and darkness as metaphors for human existence. When I was seeking music on the theme of connecting, this piece spoke to me in its connection to nature and to the expanse of the universe. Sacred and Profane has sung *Natt över jorden* as it was originally intended in previous performances, but it's been lovely to explore the repetitive ostinatos as they circle each other in our re-imagining of the work for remote choir, presented tonight



Brian Tate: *Connected*

Text: Brian Tate

Performance in collaboration with Oakland Youth Chorus Chamber Singers

*I am you are me.
That's what I said, I am you are me.
Don't you see?
It seems like I'm over here, and you're over there,
but there is something between us that's greater than air.
See thru the confusion, it's not hard to do,
it's just an illusion – this me and you.*

*I am a part of you,
you are a part of me,
and so together.
We are one body.*

*I am inside your head,
you are inside my heart.
We fit together –
perfect from the start!*

I first became aware of Brian Tate's music when my University of San Francisco choir sang his setting of the Buddhist Heart Sutra *Gate Gate* in the honorary doctorate ceremony for the Dalai Lama. That remarkable experience secured a deep place in my heart for this composer who often explores Buddhist themes of interconnectedness in his music, also heard tonight in his ***Connected***. A Canadian composer, singer, and choral musician, Tate leads several ensembles in North Vancouver and sings in the a cappella vocal trio TriVo. I am so happy to continue our connection with the Oakland Youth Chorus Chamber Singers under the leadership of the remarkable La Nell Martin, begun in March in our performance of Ysaye Barnwell's *We Are*. We are looking forward to more collaborations with OYC when we're able to sing together in person. Many thanks to our own Kim Webster for her fun choreography!

Brian Tate writes about *Connected*:

Connected came from a concept in quantum physics that I have always found quite amazing: in our human selves, we think of ourselves being in "containers," and we see others as apart from us, different from us, with empty space in between. But when you get small enough, at a sub-particle level, the distinctions disappear – there is no difference between body, skin, air, and the next body. It is all a continuum. Hence the lines "I am you are me," "something between us that's greater than air," "it's just an illusion of me and you," "it's a fact subatomically." Interestingly enough, this features strongly in Buddhist philosophy going back over two thousand years.

About Oakland Youth Chorus Chamber Singers:

Founded in 1974, the Oakland Youth Chorus (OYC) is the longest running youth chorus in the East Bay. Serving nearly 3000 singers and music students in East Bay programs each year, we focus on creating and sustaining programs of high educational and artistic merit that are accessible to and supportive of children and youth from all backgrounds. OYC welcomes all children and youth, celebrates their cultures and unique strengths, and connects them to each other, amplifying voices for changes needed to bring harmony to our world through music education and community performance. OYC Chamber Singers are made of young musicians grades 6–12, directed by La Nell Martin.

Learn more about Oakland Youth Chorus online at oaklandyouthchorus.org



Karen Siegel: *Meditation*

Text: Karen Siegel

May I still my mind.

May I open my heart.

May I be slow to anger and quick to forgive.

May I slow my pace.

May I stop to breathe.

May I hold my child a minute longer.

May I live each day.

May I learn to wait.

May I come to terms with uncertainty.

May I smell the rain.

May I hear the birds.

May I feel the warmth of the sunshine.

Composer Karen Siegel has been one of the true champions of remote choral singing since the pandemic hit in March 2020. Her choral ensemble, C4 (Choral Composer/Conductor Collective), released their first remote concert in April 2020 and has presented seven more remote concerts since. Many of these programs have featured Karen's expressive and moving works for remote choir – she has become a master of the genre and several in-person performances of these works prove that they will continue to be relevant and often-performed as we return to singing together.

In addition, Karen has provided invaluable support to those of us that have had to learn how to do this on the fly – she’s provided technical support and created a list of pieces written for remote choir (that includes works by our own Edna Yeh!). We featured Karen in our third Composer Connections installment (watch online: sacredprofane.org/karen-siegel), in which she and I discussed her music and her inspiration and we shared several of her remarkable award-winning works, many of which highlight important social justice themes such as gun violence, immigration, climate change, and women’s rights. As a fellow Jewish choral musician, I am personally drawn to Karen’s frequent use of semitic musical idiom in her work, elements that you hear both in her *Ana el na*, which we presented in our December virtual concert, and in *Meditation*, which we are thrilled to present tonight. I love how the work evokes the experience of meditating in both its expansive and more internal or intimate moments, and the way the choir weaves around and supports the mezzo-soprano solo, beautifully sung by Gretchen Wallacker.

Karen writes in her preface to the piece:

“Meditation” was inspired by my experience with the COVID-19 pandemic. I wrote the poem in early May 2020, when the NYC region was past the peak but still in the throes of the virus’ impact, and I had been sheltering at home with my family for two months. The poem grew from a meditation that helped me get through that time, and I thank Laurie Goldstein Padrón (ittakesanopenheart.com) for sharing that meditation with me.

“Meditation” is intended to be a balm for singers still physically disconnected from their choirs as the pandemic stretches on. It is the piece that I want to sing right now.

This work was created for live remote performance, where the choir members are connected via the internet and audio/video software. The latency inherent in online platforms is incorporated as an artistic element—the work is largely aleatoric, where singers repeat specific phrases purposely out of synch with the others on their voice parts. The solo allows for melody to be heard without getting lost in a swirl of sound. The form of “Meditation” follows a journey from chaos to calm, mirroring the experience of meditating in a time of distress.

“Meditation” exists in two versions, for mixed and treble choir. It was commissioned jointly by the thirteen choirs in the “Meditation” Commissioning Consortium, to be premiered by the Tier 1 choirs September-December 2020 and performed by the Tier 2 choirs January-June 2021 in live remote online performances; with choirs located in California, Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, and Washington State; and in Munich, Germany.



A Tribute to Michael Jordin

David Wikander: *Kung Liljekonvalje (King Lily of the Valley)*

Text: Gustaf Fröding

*Kung Liljekonvalje av dungen
Kung Liljekonvalje är vit som snö
Nu sörjer unga jungen
Prinsessan Liljekonvaljemö.*

*King Lily of the valley of the grove
King Lily of the valley white as snow
Now the young king is mourning
For Princess Lily of the valley maid.*

*Kung Liljekonvalje han sänker
Sitt sorgsna huvud så tungt och vekt,
Silverhjälmén blänker
I sommarskymningen blekt.*

*King Lily of the valley lowers
His mournful head so heavy and pliant,
His silver helm gleams
In the pale summer twilight.*

*Kring bårens spindelvävar
Från rökelsekaren mer blomsterstoff
En virak sakta svävar,
All skogen är full av doft.*

*Round the bier's spider web
From censers full of blooms
Frankincense quietly wafts up
The whole wood is full of scent.*

*Från björkens gungande krona.
Från vindens vaggande gröna hus
Små sorgevisor tona,
All skogen är uppfylld av sus.*

*From the birch's swaying top,
From the wind's undulating green house
Small sorrow songs sound
From the capital of the lilies of the valley.*

*Det susar ett bud genom dälden
Om kungssorg bland viskande blad,
I skogens vida världen
Från liljekonvaljernas huvudstad.*

*Word is murmured through the valley
Of kingly grief among the whispering leaves,
In the wood's wide world
From the capital of the lilies of the valley.*

Just a few years after I started conducting Sacred and Profane, I was contacted by Michael Jordin, a local choral bass and clarinet and saxophone teacher, who had heard that I regularly programmed the music of Sweden with the choir. He was interested in exploring his Swedish heritage and he joined us for what was supposed to be a brief period. Fast forward over ten years, and Michael had become a pillar in our bass section, serving as section leader and often the only one able to hit the low, low notes. He had an amazing way of finding the ideas and interests that connected people, all while retaining his own gentle warmth and even a bit of shyness, and Michael's snack nights became epic celebrations.

He and I connected over so many things through the years – our love for our dogs, good food, the outdoors, and music – both classical choral music and American folk and rock music of the 60s and 70s, particularly Brian Wilson of the Beach Boys. We were so happy when Michael recovered after a frightening bout with cancer last summer and was able to join us in our remote

rehearsals, even contributing to our virtual choir video of the Haitian song for healing, Frè O. When he became ill again a few months ago, he continued to join us in rehearsals until he was too weak to do so. His death has been a huge blow to everyone in the Bay Area music community that has cherished the years of music-making and conversation with Michael. I am grateful to Barry Stone, longtime S&P supporter, husband of our soprano Kim Webster, and former fellow-bass with Michael in the choir Coro Hispano, for creating this video tribute to Michael, featuring ***Kung Liljekonvalje***, the lovely folk-style piece about flowers in the springtime by Swedish composer David Wikander. Listen closely, and you'll be able to hear the ring of Michael's rich bass voice.



Erika Lloyd, Arr. Vince Peterson: *Cells Planets*
Text: Erika Lloyd

*So far away,
when all will shine
and all will play
hey.*

*The stars will open up
and all will be
tiny pieces of galaxy,
reflected in you and me...*

Cells, planets, same thing...

*Bright electric lights
on all the leaves,
and everything
growing from a tree,
water's blood,
and roots are veins.*

*I don't know you
but I like you,
I don't know you
but I miss you,
I don't know you
but I need you...*

*The smallest is
the biggest thing*

*and in all the world
the love is the love
from me to you...*

*I don't know you
but I like you,
I don't know you
but I miss you,
I don't know you
but I need you...*

Brooklyn-based singer and painter Erika Lloyd is most widely known as the lead for her indie pop band Little Grey Girlfriend. She also sings with the professional chamber choir Choral Chameleon and holds a Bachelors in Vocal Performance and Early Music from Indiana University. The San Francisco-based all-male chamber choir Chanticleer has performed and recorded Vince Peterson's arrangement of Lloyd's *Cells Planets* regularly since 2010, and the work has since become a staple in the choral world. I first became aware of this piece when the singers in my choir at the University of San Francisco adamantly requested it for our collaboration concert with the music group from a high security men's prison in Boston. The theme of connecting despite physical and social barriers made the work ideal for both that concert and tonight's program and a lovely way to leave you reveling in the knowledge that we will be connecting more and more in the coming months.

***We wish you all health and joy as we look forward to a more connected future.
Please stay tuned for more information about our 44th season, 2021–2022!
We can't wait to reconnect with you again!***



Sacred & Profane, A Chamber Chorus is an a cappella chamber choir founded in 1977 committed to enriching and inspiring its members and the broader community by exploring the breadth of traditional and emerging choral repertoire through authentic and exemplary performances.

WWW.SACREDPROFANE.ORG