Funny, That Doesn’t Sound Jewish

Sunday, Oct. 8, 4:00 pm
Congregation Beth Shalom
772 W. 5th Ave., Naperville

Saturday, Oct. 14, 8:00 pm
K.A.M. Isaiah Israel
1100 E. Hyde Park Blvd., Chicago (Hyde Park)

Sunday, Oct. 15, 4:00 pm
West Suburban Temple Har Zion
1040 N. Harlem Ave., River Forest

Sunday, Oct. 22, 4:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall
1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston

Chicago a cappella
Megan Bell, Soprano
Katarzyna Dorula, Soprano
Kristin Lelm, Soprano
Sarah Ponder, Mezzo-soprano
Emily Price, Mezzo-soprano
Garrett Johannsen, Tenor
Trevor Mitchell, Tenor
Ryan Cox, Bass
Joe Labozetta, Bass
Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee, Bass

Founder and Artistic Director
Jonathan Miller

Principal Music Director
John William Trotter

Chicago a cappella is supported in part by the MacArthur Funds for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council Agency; and the Oak Park Area Arts Council, in partnership with the Village of Oak Park and the National Endowment for the Arts.
SAVE THE DATE
for Chicago a cappella’s Gala concert,

*Get Happy: Songs To Make You Smile*

Friday, May 18, 2018
Venue One Loft
1655 W Walnut St, Chicago, IL

Join us for a joyful evening as Chicago a cappella performs songs that bring smiles to our faces, from “Blue Skies” to “Don't Worry, Be Happy.” You’ll enjoy a dinner buffet and be inspired by our talented High School Intern ensemble. All proceeds benefit Chicago a cappella’s educational and artistic programming.

Information: chicagoacappella.org or (773) 281-7820

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Christmas a cappella
A celebration of the holiday season with Christmas songs from around the world

Available in the lobby: $16 each (includes sales tax)
Also available at the merchandise table are earbuds, tote bags, candy and water bottles
PROGRAM

Kaddish Shaleym.................................................................................................................. Salamone Rossi
Dirmi che piú non ardo........................................................................................................ Rossi

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Am Karfreitag, Op. 79, No. 6 ............................................................................................. Felix Mendelssohn
Zion Streckt Ihr Hände Aus from Elijah ............................................................................... Mendelssohn
   arr. J. Miller

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Missa Morus ............................................................................................................................ Elliot Levine
   Kyrie
   Gloria
   Sanctus/Benedictus
   Agnus Dei

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Haynt iz Purim, brider.................................................. Mordkhe Rivesman/Abraham Goldfaden
   arr. J. Miller
Steppin’ Out with My Baby ................................................................................................. Irving Berlin
   arr. Deke Sharon

They Say It’s Wonderful ....................................................................................................... Berlin
   arr. Steve Zegree

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Give Me Hunger ................................................................................................................... Stacy Garrop
Hava Nagila .......................................................................................................................... Garrop

INTERMESSION

“Soave é il vento” from Cosi fan Tutte...................................................... Lorenzo da Ponte/Wolfgang Mozart,
   arr. Jonathan Miller

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Be Thou My Vision.............................................................................................................. Lee Kesselman
   Trad. Irish Melody, arr. Lee R. Kesselman

* * * * *

Mi Shebeirach ...................................................................................................................... Joshua Fishbein
A Prep-School Boy .............................................................................................................. Fishbein

* * * * *

Let him kiss me..................................................................................................................... Jonathan Miller
Celtic Chassidic Kaddish..................................................................................................... Miller

* * * * *

Free At Last........................................................................................................................... arr. Max Janowski
Sim Shalom.......................................................................................................................... Janowski
   arr. J. Miller

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the ushers. Unauthorized photography or sound recording of any kind are strictly prohibited. Smoking is prohibited in all venues. Outside food and beverage are not permitted in the audience seating area. Thank you for your cooperation.
With this program, we explore the experiences of Jewish composers throughout the centuries. In some cases, we don’t know much about them, and we will learn of them simply through their music. In other cases, something useful has been written about the composer—or, even better, the composer is alive and willing to tell us about composing!

You might say that this concert is an ode to the joys of being flexible and adaptable, of being able to negotiate different social spheres, and of what linguists now call “code-switching”—talking the talk of the various communities that we each inhabit, in this case both Jewish and more mainstream worlds. Minorities of all stripes are familiar with this phenomenon. In today’s concert, we get to see and hear how it plays out in the lives of a dozen composers, whose music sounds, at times, either more or less Jewish. Seven of those composers are represented with multiple songs apiece, which allow us to get a taste of those composers’ musical palettes both within and outside Jewish contexts.

* * * * * * *

These are some of the questions that I had when we first came up with the idea for this concert:
What makes a nice Jewish boy want to write a piece of high-church liturgical music in Latin?
Does a piece of music sound more Jewish just because it’s in Hebrew?
What does it mean for a piece of music to “sound Jewish,” anyway?
Who gets to be counted as a Jewish composer or librettist?
How much “code-switching” (see above) do Jewish composers have to do? What are the results?

This concert attempts to answer some of these questions. Even if the answers are bound to be incomplete, the questions create an interesting lens through which to view history and culture.

People are often curious about what drives a composer to create a piece of music in a particular way. One of the great joys of working with living (and recent) composers is that we can learn their stories either directly or indirectly. Spoiler alert: sometimes the creation of a piece of music that “sounds Jewish” (or not) is simply a result of (a) the circumstances under which the piece was composed and (b) the choice of a text, and not anything particularly wrenching about enduring prejudice or persecution.

* * * * * * *

I like to think that human beings have not changed that much over the millennia. I sometimes wish I could take Palestrina, Rossi, or Mendelssohn out for a beer and see what they would say about singers and about working for the church or synagogue. I would ask each composer things like this: Is your boss (the rabbi or priest, or maybe a bishop or cardinal) a pompous narcissist, and if so, what bearing does that have on what you wrote? Are your singers able to perform the music you hear in your head? If not, what do you do?

* * * * * * *
As for the very nerdy question of what makes something actually sound “Jewish,” we tend to have rather unconscious filters that do so. Josh Fishbein has helped me identify some of what we think we are hearing when we hear something that “sounds Jewish.” One might think of a minor key, a melodic style that mostly has one word per syllable, a scale that might have a “flat 2” and a “sharp 3” tones, like the well-known *Ahava Rabah* melodic phrase, also known in Yiddish as a *freygish* melody.

* * * * * *

You will see in the notes below how articulate our community of composers is. It is wonderful to be able to reach out to colleagues who not only write beautiful music but also write beautifully and thoughtfully about their work as musicians. Not everyone can do both.

This program has never been a neatly wrapped package, coming as it did as an idea that seemed (and still seems) well worth exploring, even if we didn’t know at the outset quite where it was going to go. I appreciate the willingness of our board and staff, especially Matt Greenberg, to indulge these ideas that are a little harder than others to describe and market. To those of you who are here, you also have my thanks that you were curious enough to see what we’d bring you this time. Your loyalty is what allows us to do this work in the first place.

Enjoy the show.

—Jonathan Miller, Founder and Artistic Director
Salamone Rossi: *Kaddish Shaleym*

There are several versions of the Kaddish prayer, which serve as structural markers in the worship service. The most familiar is the Mourner’s Kaddish, although that prayer is almost never sung. More commonly sung are the “chatzi” (half) Kaddish and this one, the “full” Kaddish, also known as the *Kaddish Shaleym* or *Kaddish Titkabal*. There is nothing mournful in the text at all; the words simply extol and praise God in dozens of different ways.

Salamone Rossi wrote this version of the Hebrew prayer in five voice parts. As a result, the texture is much like a five-voice madrigal, something you might hear written by Gastoldi in Italy or by Thomas Morley or Orlando Gibbons in England. The main things that help it to sound Jewish are the minor key and, of course, the Hebrew text. However, just like any madrigal in triple time, it has to dance!

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**Yitgadal ve’yitkadash shmeh rabah.**

Magnified and sanctified be his great name.

**Be’almah di’vrav kirutei veyamlich malchuteh.**

In the world which he hath created according to his will, may he establish his kingdom.

**Bechayechon uyyomeichon uvchayeoi dechol beit Yisrael, bagalah uvizman kariv veimru ameyn.**

During your life and during your days, and during the life of all the house of Israel, even speedily and at a near time, and say ye, Amen.

**Yehey shmey rabah mevorach leolam ulolmei almayah.**

Let his great name be blessed for ever and to all eternity.

**Yitbarach veyishtabach veyitpa’ar veyitromam veyitnaseh veyithadar veyitaleh veyithallal, shmeh dekudesha, b’rich Hu.**

Blessed, praised and glorified, exalted, extolled and honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be he.

**Le’eilah min kol birchata veshirata, tushbechata ve’nechemata, da’amiran be’almah veimru ameyn.**

Though he be high above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations, which are uttered in the world; and say ye, Amen.

**Yehey sh’lama raba min sh’maya v’chayim aleinu “al kol Yisrael, v’imru ameyn.**

May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

**Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya’aseh shalom aleinu veal kol Yisrael, v’imru ameyn.**

He who maketh peace in his high places, may he make peace for us and for all Israel; and say ye, Amen.

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—trans. J. Miller

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*This translation also applies to Jonathan Miller’s *Celtic Chassidic Kaddish*. *" Funny, That Doesn’t Sound Jewish"*
Salamone Rossi: *Dirmi che piú non ardo*

This is an actual five-voice madrigal with Italian text, printed early in Rossi’s career in his *Primo libro de madrigali* in the opening years of the 1600s. The text is by one of the more fashionable poets known in the Mantuan court. Rossi does not do anything exotic here but rather stays much within the stylistic norms of the time. The remarkable thing here is that a Jewish composer was given sufficient patronage to have the leisure to compose and especially to have his publication underwritten by someone; music publishing then, as now, was an expensive undertaking.

*Dirmi che piú non ardo?*

Tell me that I no longer burn?

*Dirmi che piú non amo?*

Tell me that I no longer love?

A voi begli occhi, à voi me ne richiamo;

To you, beautiful eyes, I call you;

Occhi che penetrante

Eyes that penetrate

De l’alma mia nel piú riposto loco,

Into the inmost place of my soul:

Sapete pur, ch’io ardo, e di qual foco;

You know, however, that I’m burning, and of what kind of fire;

Occhi, luci beate,

[You] eyes, bright lights,

Ditelo à chi nol crede,

Say to him who believes not,

Che non vivrei, s’io non havessi fede.

That I would not live, I did not have faith.

—Cesare Rinaldi

Felix Mendelssohn: *Am Karfreitag, Op. 79, No. 6*

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy was the grandson of one of the most significant Jewish thinkers in German Jewish history, the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, who was considered the top mind in the Jewish Enlightenment. Moses encouraged Jews to take part in secular (German) education and to learn German literature, which was new for the Jewish community there. Partly through his influence, Jewish literary and cultural salons proliferated in Berlin, and the question of what rights Jews should and could have was a hot topic of debate.

It was not until 1791, as part of the French Revolution, that Jews had ever been given full rights as citizens in any European state, and things were even more precarious in Prussia, where the Mendelssohns lived and worked. In 19th-century Germany, as in many other times and places, being an overt practitioner of Judaism significantly limited one’s professional prospects.

On March 11, 1812, it was decreed in Berlin that Jews were to be given full rights as citizens. There were strings attached: Jews were required to learn German (not just Yiddish), and it was strongly encouraged that they convert to Protestantism. Moses had six children: two retained the Jewish faith, two became Roman Catholic, and the other two, including Felix’s father Abraham, converted to Lutheranism. It remains a messy picture, because Felix’s mother Lea (née Salomon), who was also born Jewish, converted with her husband Abraham in 1822, when Felix was already an adult. According to one scholar, Felix’s mother Lea did not see conversion to Christianity as a repudiation of her Judaism; indeed, she viewed Christianity as within the “universalization of Judaism.” This is a rather broad-minded view, given the times.
NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER cont.

Mendelssohn wrote this Good Friday Psalm as part of his Opus 79, a set of six a cappella motets for double choir. They were composed in 1843-44, toward the end of his life, when he was working for the Staats- und Dom-chor, a famous boys’ choir at the Berlin cathedral. This is an austere, simple setting, a far cry from the long-breathed lines of his oratorio writing.

Um unsrer Sünden willen
hat sich Christus erniedriget,
und ist gehorsam geworden bis zum Tode am Kreuze;
darum hat Gott ihn erhöhet, und ihm einen Namen gegeben, der über alle Namen ist.
Halleluja, Halleluja!
—Julius Schubring

For our sins
Christ has humbled himself,
And has become obedient unto death on the cross,
Therefore God has exalted him, and given him a name which is above all names.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah!
—trans. J. Miller
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Felix Mendelssohn: Zion Streckt Ihr Hände Aus from Elijah
This sweet, plaintive duet from the oratorio Elijah shows Mendelssohn in a tender vein. Mendelssohn wrote to his friend Julius Schubring, who ended up writing the work’s libretto, of his fascination with the character of Elijah. Mendelssohn said that he himself wished to be a prophet for his own time, “strong, eager, and also evil and angry and sinister.” These aren’t things we typically associate with Mendelssohn, but his intent to produce a dramatic and compelling work certainly succeeded.

Herr, höre unser Gebet:
Zion streckt ihre Hände aus,
und da ist Niemand, der sie tröste.
—Julius Schubring

Lord, hear our prayer:
Zion stretches out her hands,
And there is none who comforts her.
—trans. J. Miller
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Elliot Levine: Missa Morus (Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus/Ben., Agnus)
Elliot Levine is a singer, composer, arranger, and conductor. For many years based in New York City, he now lives in southern California. He has been the baritone for the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble since its inception in 1969, an incredible track record. He has been awarded five Meet the Composer grants and has received many other commissions and awards.

A versatile and flexible musician, Levine wrote the Missa Morus when he was a singer at the famous St. Thomas More school in Manhattan. He writes thoughtfully about the experience of being a composer:
Being a composer to me means being moved and interested in the texts and musical heritage that one is surrounded by in a particular situation. I wouldn’t want to be pigeonholed as a “Jewish” composer. Salamone Rossi wrote 37 settings of Hebrew texts but, mainly, he wrote 250 Italian madrigals and many trio sonatas.

I am interested and moved by the texts and prayers of my religion and cultural heritage. I love much of the panoply of music written over the ages for those texts. So when I am setting a Jewish text, I throw that into the mental mix and sometimes am affected by history and
sometimes not. Sometimes I deliberately try not to fall into typical modalities and styles and just see where the text takes me on a journey. There are many stereotypes that one can choose to use or ignore.

When writing church music I feel freer to delve into myself. Of course, one is then in the great shadow of the heritage of master composers who have set the same texts. When I sang for eighteen years in The Church of St. Thomas More I had the opportunity to write and get things performed and learn from that process. It was daunting to have my name listed alongside Palestrina, Lassus and Mozart. I was always trying to learn from those great examples what “worked” in terms of melody, harmony, voicing etc. I first started doing Psalm settings in a nearby temple job because I didn’t think much of the contemporary setting we were working on. I brought them into church for a tryout and then brought them into temple where they also became regular repertoire.

So perhaps the final question is “Does my church music sometimes sound Jewish?” I don’t really think so, but perhaps I’m not seeing it. I especially don’t think the Missa Morus does, but perhaps some other pieces have something that could be considered so. Having sung a wide variety of repertoires for many years, I hope I have developed a sense of what is “good” according to my particular standards. I have sung tons of third-rate music from many traditions, and that is a tremendously useful experience for a composer. Why is this piece boring and lifeless? Why can’t I wait till it’s over? I have quite a few pieces of mine which are in that category and are in the back folder of a file drawer. Every once in a while I look at them again and affirm that this is the correct place for them.

 Sanctus/Benedictus
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Hosanna in excelsis.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.
Hosanna in excelsis.

Agnus Dei
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis. (2x)
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem.

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us. (2x)
Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.
—trad. Catholic liturgy

Mordkhe Rivesman/ Abraham Goldfaden: Haynt iz Purim, brider
Purim is one of the most joyous festivals in the Jewish year. It occurs in midwinter, between Chanukah and Passover. On Purim, we read the entire scroll (the whole megillah) of the Book of Esther. Part of the fun is using noisemakers (greggers) to drown out the name of Haman, the villain in the Esther story, every time it is read. How appropriate that this tune was penned by another Mordecai (Esther’s father in the Purim story), Mordecai Rivesman, with help from Abraham Goldfaden.
Haynt iz Purim, brider, 
es ist eyn yontev groys.
Lo mir zingen lider,
un geyn fun hoyz tzu hoyz.

Lakht, kinderlach lacht, a yontevl makht,
kinds-kinder gedenken dem nes,
zingt, briderlekh, zingt, tanst freylich un shpringt
dem tayern tog nit fargest.
—trad. Hebrew liturgy

Today is Purim, brothers,
It's a great holiday.
Let's sing songs together,
And go from house to house.

Laugh, children, laugh, make festive,
Grandchildren, remember the miracle;
Sing, little brothers, sing, dance merrily and
spring about
So that you'll not forget this precious day.
—trans. J. Miller
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Irving Berlin: Steppin’ Out with My Baby
What popular song seems to rise straight from the above Yiddish melody? One of Irving Berlin’s greatest hits, *Steppin’ Out*, that’s what! To connect the two songs, I have put together a musical “scene” that shows one way Berlin might have taken the Purim song in 1948 and turned it into a hit for *Easter Parade.* (There are even melodic parallels between the second half of *Haynt iz Purim* and *Puttin’ on the Ritz.* ) I have given a swing element to the Yiddish song, which makes the distance between the two tunes very small indeed.

Irving Berlin: They Say It’s Wonderful
A song that perhaps doesn’t sound so Jewish is this tune from *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946). It feels mostly like an American Songbook classic, pure and simple. If we were digging deep for Jewish sounds, we might notice some of the flatted notes in the melody, such as in the second time we hear the word “wonderful.” Judge for yourself! Irving Berlin wrote the song, along with “You Can’t Get a Man with a Gun” and “I Got the Sun in the Morning,” in a single weekend. The arrangement is by the late Steve Zegree, the internationally renowned arranger and musician who taught vocal jazz at Western Michigan and Indiana Universities.

Stacy Garrop: Give Me Hunger
An award-winning composer who recently left academia to compose full-time, Stacy Garrop is one of Chicago’s brightest lights in the classical-music world. She composed *Give Me Hunger* on a text by Chicago’s own Carl Sandburg. She was originally inspired to work with Sandburg’s poetry after hearing Chicago a cappella perform *Prayers of Steel*, composed by the late Jerry Troxell on a poem from Sandburg’s collection *Cornhuskers*. She writes: “Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) was an American author known for his hard, unflinching observations that allow readers to experience Sandburg’s pride, distain, love, hatred, and sympathy for humanity through his works. In particular, his poetry grasps the best and worst of mankind, from the noblest aspirations of man to the subjugation of the poor, as well as to the trials and tribulations of the working class. Very few poems exhibit his softer side, and even fewer reflect his thoughts on love. *At a Window* (the poem’s original title) is one of these rare gems in his body of work. Sandburg starts the poem angrily, challenging the forces that control the universe to take away all that he has; this anger quickly gives way to a surprising gentleness as he asks for love in place of all else. In my piece (titled *Give Me Hunger*, drawn from the first line of text), I reflect Sandburg’s enraged voice with a relentless ostinato (a repeating gesture) coupled with dissonant chords; for the poem’s softer side, I employ rich, lush harmonies to anticipate the “coming of a little love.” This original version...
of the piece, for male voices only (including falsetto altos and sopranos) was commissioned by Chanticleer. Chicago a cappella’s performance marks the premiere of the mixed-voice version.

*At a Window* by Carl Sandburg
Give me hunger,  
O you gods that sit and give  
The world its orders.  
Give me hunger, pain and want,  
Shut me out with shame and failure  
From your doors of gold and fame,  
Give me your shabbiest, weariest hunger!

But leave me a little love,  
A voice to speak to me in the day end,  
A hand to touch me in the dark room  
Breaking the long loneliness.  
In the dusk of day-shapes  
Blurring the sunset,  
One little wandering, western star  
Thrust out from the changing shores of shadow.  
Let me go to the window,  
Watch there the day-shapes of dusk  
And wait and know the coming  
Of a little love.

**Stacy Garrop: Hava Nagila**
Although Stacy Garrop grew up in a very observant Jewish household, she had not done much with Jewish themes as a composer until Chicago a cappella commissioned her to write two pieces on Jewish texts for the ensemble’s fifteenth anniversary season. The works are *Lo Yisa Goy* and *Hava Nagila*. To the extent that any piece can be said to sound Jewish, *Hava Nagila* probably fills the bill; but what Stacy Garrop does with it is surprising and delightful. She has the tune emerge slowly out of a muddy texture with random rhythms, almost the musical equivalent of a fish walking up on land. Once the tune is established, she plays with it further in stops and starts, before moving to a grand finish.

Hava nagila v’nis’m’cha  
Hava neran’nah v’nis’m’cha  
Uru achim b’lev sameach.  
—trad. Hebrew liturgy

Let’s rejoice and be happy.  
Let’s sing and be happy.  
Awake, brothers, with a happy heart!  
—Stacy Garrop  
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Sunday, April 22, 7:30 pm
Lincoln Hall

Tickets: chicagoacappella.org

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HOLIDAYS A CAPPELLA
Experience familiar holiday songs in fresh new ways as our singers ring in the season with style. From solemn and holy to merry and bright, we’ll bring you more of your favorites than ever. Delight in beloved carols, Chanukah melodies, Christmas spirituals, and even some superb new discoveries—all with the gorgeous voices and intimate blend that have made this a Chicago musical tradition.

Naperville
Friday, Dec. 8, 8:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall on the campus of North Central College

Chicago (Gold Coast)
Saturday, Dec. 9, 8:00 pm
Fourth Presbyterian Church

Chicago (Hyde Park)
Sunday, Dec. 10, 4:00 pm
First Unitarian Church

Evanston
Friday, Dec. 15, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Chicago (Lincoln Park)
Saturday, Dec. 16, 8:00 pm
St. Clement Church

Oak Park
Sunday, Dec. 17, 4:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

LOVE STORIES
A love-drenched program ranging from erotic Renaissance madrigals to sultry jazz standards is coupled with the drama of Tom Mula’s script, performed by a pair of accomplished Chicago actors. From Shakespearean sonnets to Modern Era romance and “Fever,” the compelling intimacy of this ever-eclectic concert will make an unforgettable musical Valentine.

Evanston
Saturday, Feb. 10, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Chicago (Hyde Park)
Sunday, Feb. 11, 4:00 pm
Logan Center for the Arts

Oak Park
Friday, Feb. 16, 8:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

Naperville
Saturday, Feb. 17, 8:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall on the campus of North Central College

THE HISTORY OF ROCK AND SOUL PART 2 WITH TERRI HEMMERT
At this sequel to 2016’s sold-out concert, legendary Radio Hall of Famer Terri Hemmert returns to guide us from singer-songwriters of the ’70s through Prince and beyond. With inventive new arrangements by Patrick Sinozich and Terri’s delightful and inspiring on-stage narration, this will be an amazing musical trip!

Oak Park
Friday, April 13, 8:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

Evanton
Saturday, April 14, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Naperville
Sunday, April 15, 4:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall on the campus of North Central College

Chicago (Hyde Park)
Friday, April 20, 8:00 pm
Logan Center for the Arts

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Lorenzo da Ponte and W. A. Mozart, arr. Jonathan Miller: Soave sia il vento from Cosi fan tutte
As it turns out, Mozart's famous librettist was born Jewish! Emanuele Conegliano was born in 1749 in the Jewish ghetto of Ceneda near Venice, to Geremia Conegliano, a leather tanner, and his wife Rachele. Emanuele was the eldest of three sons born to the couple. Rachele died when Emanuele was five years old. At age thirteen, Emanuele was called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah. A year later, in 1763, his father Geremia wished to marry a Catholic girl, but marriage between Jews and Catholics was forbidden.
The practical solution was for Geremia to convert, so father and sons all did so. The priest doing the conversion was Monsignor Lorenzo da Ponte, so the eldest boy took on the same name for his new Catholic identity. The next year he was enrolled in seminary to receive a full classical education, something no Jew in Venice could have obtained. Having become embroiled in politics—and not on the side of the Inquisition—da Ponte left Venice for Vienna, where he arrived in 1781 and secured the post of poet to the Italian theater there. Two years later he met Mozart, and three years later The Marriage of Figaro was premiered.
The final collaboration between the two was the 1791 opera Cosi fan tutte, from which this beautiful trio for solo voices is taken.

Soave sia il vento,  
Tranquilla sia l'onda,  
Ed ogni elemento  
Benigno risponda  
Ai nostri (vostri) desir.
—Lorenzo Da Ponte

Gentle is the wind,  
Calm is the wave,  
And every one of the elements  
Answer warmly  
To our (your) desire.
—trans. J. Miller

Lee Kesselman: Be Thou My Vision
Lee Kesselman is Professor and Director of Choral Music at College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and a prolific composer with a distinguished catalogue of choral works as well as solo song and opera and many ASCAP awards. He grew up attending Congregation Emanu-El B’ne Jeshurun, a classical Reform synagogue which was then in Milwaukee (and is now in its suburbs). He writes: “Emanu-El had male cantors, used an organ in worship and a paid quartet on Friday nights. The cantors were wonderful singers, one a tenor and then a baritone. No guitars, no tambourines, no Israeli folk melodies --- and the dialect was Ashkenaz.”

This song, Be thou my vision, was written on a commission from the Chicago Chamber Choir, a community group which was at the time directed by the legendary Doreen Rao and was doing an all-Irish program. Kesselman notes, “she specifically asked me for a version of Be Thou My Vision. As it happens, it was a familiar tune to me—I have heard many arrangements and sung it in worship services. Also, a different arrangement of it was on a concert program in Ireland about a decade earlier. She wanted something atmospheric with some aspect of ‘collage’ in my arrangement.”

Kesselman’s approach is much like Elliot Levine’s when working with a given text and any existing melodic material:
“While I’ve set a number of texts which come from a variety of faith traditions, my first step with a hymn tune or any sacred text would be to read the text afresh, seeing if the words speak to me. I need to know that the overriding sentiment is something I believe, even if
some of the specific terminology might not be mine. In this case, the text did speak to me. And the tune is hauntingly beautiful and memorable and seems so, so Irish. Strangely enough, the male-centric “King/Father” language bothered me the most, so I suggested alternatives.

I think I work similarly whether the piece is sacred or secular, instrumental or choral, Jewish or not.....start by trying to find the kernel or the DNA of the project. I immerse myself in that DNA—long enough and deeply enough to make the writing flow as naturally as it can in a self-consistent way. If I’m arranging, I’m using found materials, words, tunes, harmonies. If the piece (text or tune) is close to my own background, then I’m writing using materials that I’ve found at home, or close to home. And, for example, if the tune or text is something that I remember from childhood or synagogue or even before, I’ve already begun the immersion process. And while that may all sound very clinical, of course, the affective/emotional/inspirational/passion is always present. It’s not part of the process, but it does drive the process, fuel the engine, light the path.”

We can be grateful for such a thoughtful look inside the creative process.

Joshua Fishbein: Mi Shebeirach (A Prayer for Healing)

An accomplished composer, singer and pianist, Joshua Fishbein (b. 1984) writes both vocal and instrumental music. The winner of many awards and commissions, he most recently received the 2017 Dale Warland Commissioning Award from Chorus America, for a work that he will write for Chorus Austin.

About his musical background, the composer writes:

“The Jewish choral music I was steeped in was very much homophonic. In block-chord harmonies, the choir backed up the cantor, who sang in a freely ornamented style with the traditional nusach (modes). My favorite mode was the Ahava Rabba mode, which is most closely associated with Jewish-sounding music because it is used in Hava Nagilah. I used that mode in my own Mussaf Kedushah, which I modeled after Dunajewski’s.”

As for this particular sacred work in Hebrew, Joshua Fishbein notes as follows:

“I composed Mi Shebeirach earlier this year (2017) for Novi Cantori’s New Edition’s Composers Forum. The performance honored Shriners Hospital for Children in Springfield, MA, with original choral works celebrating the hospital’s mission of healing. Novi Cantori’s music director, Ellen Gilson Voth, chose Mi Shebeirach for me to set. However, the original words that she chose were those written by Debbie Friedman as part of her popular song. Because the lyrics to Friedman’s song are copyright protected, I defaulted to the traditional words from the [new] Reform prayerbook (Mishkan T’filah). My great aunt, Rachel Glaser, is a retired Hebrew school principal. I often consult her about the Hebrew before composing a new Hebrew setting, as I did in this case. The words are both in Hebrew and Aramaic. For the section in Aramaic, I shifted into a different musical language, composing in the octatonic scale with more rhythmic drive. I also sought to infuse this part of the work with a flavor of exotic antiquity. For that reason, I chose to feature the double leading-tone cadence, harkening back musically to ancient times. I also feature the Lydian-Mixolydian (#4/b7) synthetic mode towards the end for “V’nomar Amen.”

The piece was recently performed a second time at Washington National Cathedral for a recital honoring Molly Young, a 30-year-old professional soprano, currently battling breast cancer.
Chicago *a cappella* is honored to be giving the Midwest premiere of this work.

**Hebrew:**
Mi Shebeirach avoteinu v’imoteinu, Avraham, Yitzchak, v’Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, v’Leia, hu y’vareich et hacholim.

Ha Kadosh Baruch Hu Yimalei rachamim aleihem L’hachali mam ul’rapotam ul’hachazikam V’yishlach lahem m’heirah r’fuah, R’fuah sh’lemah min hashamayim R’fuat hanefesh ur’fuat haguf

*continues in Aramaic*

Hashta baagala uviz’man kariv V’nomar: Amein

—trad. Hebrew liturgy

He who has blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, May He bless the sick

[May] The Holy Blessed One Fill them with compassion, For their health, for their recovery, for their strength; And He should send to them speedily recovery, A complete recovery from the heavens, Healing of the spirit, and healing of the body,

Soon, quickly, and without delay

And let us say: Amen

—trans. Joshua Fishbein

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Joshua Fishbein: *A Prep-School Boy*

How about a new piece of choral music on a text written by that icon of British choral music, Sir Benjamin Britten? We asked Joshua Fishbein to pair his *Mi Shebeirach* with something that felt decidedly non-Jewish-sounding, and this was his choice.

The composer writes: “*A Prep-School Boy* for unaccompanied SATB chorus sets the following text from the introductory note to Benjamin Britten’s *Simple Symphony*, Op. 4 (1934) [text below].” “I purposefully crafted a very literal musical interpretation of this text. For instance, the word “minor” is set in pulsating minor triads. Also, the initials “E. B.” are sung on the pitches E and B. Less serious than my other secular choral works, this composition shares similarities with music one might hear performed by a cappella groups on college campuses, such as humming and singing on neutral vowels like “Oh” and “Ah.” Elements of this piece also resemble 20th Century English choral music by William Walton and Ralph Vaughan Williams, in addition to Britten himself. Examples include abruptly distant harmonic changes, shocking cross-relations, and slow triplets that match the rhythm of the English language. Overall, I designed *A Prep-School Boy* to be very much in the spirit of the composer that it honors – E. B. Britten However, with its lush harmonies and intricate counterpoint, this piece is still my own.”

When we asked the composer for a little more history on the song, he told us, “I composed *A Prep-School Boy* in 2013 for the Cantate Chamber Singers’s Young Composers Contest. Because it was Britten’s centennial, Gisele Becker (Cantate’s Music Director, and a Britten specialist) chose a quote by Britten that he inscribed on the back of the front cover to his *Simple Symphony*. I don’t usually do these contests where you have to set a specific text to enter, but I did in this case because the text sounded fun to set, and I had a week of time to work on it. … It really isn’t Jewish in any way, except that it was composed by a Jewish composer.” In addition to being a younger composer’s sort of homage to a master from a previous generation, this piece is a showcase for Fishbein’s talent and a testament to what happens when finely honed skills meet a particular composing challenge.
Jonathan Miller: *Let him kiss me (From Kisses of Myrrh)*

Chicago *a cappella*’s artistic director, Jonathan Miller, wrote this choral motet in 2001 on a text from the Song of Songs in the Hebrew Bible. It is the opening movement of a five-movement work, with all texts drawn from the same book of scripture. The occasion was an unusual program by Chicago *a cappella* called “Let him kiss me: The intimate *a cappella*,” which remains the only time in the group’s history when a whole program was performed by a vocal quintet instead of 9 or 10 singers.

The composer writes: “I remember being fired by the passion in the text. It is so simple but has so much promise – and the promise seemed to be something that I could express by overlapping lines of counterpoint. In graduate school I had studied a great deal of Renaissance counterpoint. When I got hold of this text, I wanted to try my hand at writing something that felt sort of like Palestrina or Josquin but would be in my own slightly more adventurous harmonic language. I was very pleased with the result, and it turned out being the first piece of mine that was ever published, thanks to Gunilla Luboff from Walton Music who took it on. I still remember the excitement of singing the bass line myself in my own piece. Also, like Elliot Levine and Lee Kesselman, I wasn’t trying to write anything that sounded Jewish, even though it’s an Old Testament text… I was trying to do something that would honor the spirit of the 16th-century composers who have given me such inspiration.”

Jonathan Miller: *Celtic Chassidic Kaddish*

In this song, Hebrew liturgy meets Riverdance. Jonathan Miller has had the idea for this piece for many years. It arose when he was doing research on various Jewish communities around the world for the Chicago *a cappella* program called *Melodic Migrations: Global Jewish Music*. He learned that the Lord High Mayor of Dublin, Ireland, at one point had been Jewish. Started casting about: “Hmm, what would a Jewish-Irish piece of music sound like?” The text comes from the same place in the liturgy as Salamone Rossi’s piece that opened this program: the Kaddish shaleym or “full Kaddish” that is used as a structural marker in the worship service, especially in the morning.

Refer to Rossi’s Kaddish Shaleym above for translation

Max Janowski: *Free At Last*

In addition to his 53 years of service leading music on Friday nights and Saturday mornings at K.A.M. Temple (now K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation) in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood, Max Janowski for decades spent Sunday mornings at All Souls Universalist Society in South Shore, a liberal congregation devoted explicitly to being a place where African-American and Caucasian people would worship together. Jonathan Miller himself spent many Sundays there while a freshman at the University of Chicago. Max would freely arrange virtually any melody that seemed like it would work in that Universalist worship setting—that included tunes by Bob Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, and the creators of the Negro Spiritual. Max was a fierce believer in civil rights (no huge surprise, given that he escaped Nazi Germany in 1933) and loved the spiritual. *Free at Last.* This is celebration of that tune.
Max Janowski: Sim Shalom

Apart from Avinu Malkeynu, this is Janowski’s greatest hit. The prayer comes from the end of the Amidah or silent devotion that is the heart of the Jewish worship service; this paragraph is from the morning liturgy. The melody shares with Avinu Malkeynu the figure of a rising fourth in a minor key; unlike Avinu Malkeynu, this melody also winds around the flatted 7th scale degree (C natural in the key of D minor). This a cappella version of Sim Shalom was created by Jonathan Miller for CAC’s 2012 program Genius in the Synagogue: A Musical Portrait of Max Janowski, commemorating the 100th anniversary of Janowski’s birth.

Sim shalom tova u’vracha
Cheyn vachesed v’rachamim
Aleynu v’al kol yirey sh’mecha
Sim shalom, sim shalom

Cantor:
Barcheynu Avinu
Kulanu k’echad
b’or panecha
Ki v’or panecha natata lanu,
Adonai Eloheinu,
Torat chayim v’ahavat che-sed
uts’dakah uv’racha v’rachamim
v’chayim v’shalom

V’tov b’eynecha
lvareych et amicha Yisraeyl
v’et kol ha’amim
b’chol eyt uv’chol sha’ah bishlomecha

Baruch atah Adonai
(Baruch Hu uvaruch sh’mo)
oseh hashalom.
Ameyn.

—trad. Hebrew liturgy

Grant peace, goodness, blessing,
Grace, lovingkindness, and mercy
To us and to all who fear Your name;
Grant peace, grant peace.

Cantor:
Bless us, Father,
All of us together as one
in the light of your presence;
for in that light, truly, you have given us,
O Lord our God,
The Torah of life and the love of lovingkindness,
And charity and blessing and mercy
And life and peace.

And may it be good in Your eyes
To bless the people Israel
And all peoples
At all times, and in all the year, with Your peace.

Blessed are You, O God,
(Blessed be He, and blessed be his Name),
Who makes peace.
Amen.

—trans. J. Miller
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THANK YOU

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Fiona Queen, Music Institute of Chicago
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Chicago a cappella Outreach

Chicago a cappella’s Educational Outreach Programs strive to promote and improve the life-long performance, understanding and appreciation of a cappella vocal music through programming, mentorship and collaboration with schools and community organizations in Chicago and beyond.

Youth Choral Festival
The Youth Choral Festival is a day of workshops, rehearsals, discussions, and mentoring for area high school ensembles. The students work with Chicago a cappella’s artists, and the festival culminates in a concert featuring all the groups and Chicago a cappella. The fifth annual Youth Choral Festival will be held on January 20, 2018 at the Logan Center for the Arts.

¡Cantaré! Chicago
Entering its second year, ¡Cantaré! Chicago is an educational program that combines Mexican heritage with choral singing. Novelli Jurado, esteemed Mexican composer will work throughout the school year with two high schools and one elementary in Chicago. Jurado will compose new music for each school, and the three schools, along with our High School Intern ensemble and our Chicago a cappella singers will come together for a final performance on Friday, May 4, 2018 at Benito Juarez Community Academy.

¡Cantaré! Chicago is a partner program of VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

High School Internship Program
Our High School Internship Program gives students a full year of musical and administrative training and mentoring with Chicago a cappella’s singers, directors, board members, and arts administrators. Selected through a comprehensive audition process, seven talented and motivated students are serving as Chicago a cappella High School Interns in 2017-18, forming their own a cappella ensemble and gaining skills to further their musical ambitions.

Customized Outreach
Other programs, such as master classes, choral residencies, and youth concerts, are presented by artists from Chicago a cappella’s professional roster of singers and directors, and are customized for the specific needs of each organization.

Learn more at chicagoacappella.org/outreach
Founded in 1993 by artistic director Jonathan Miller, Chicago a cappella presents an annual series of concerts, performs on tour and in special engagements, creates recordings and broadcasts, and produces educational programs, all with an ensemble of the area’s finest professional singers. The group is heard frequently on radio, including appearances on Performance Today and BBC’s The Choir, and the ensemble’s own syndicated special A Chanukah Celebration with Chicago a cappella. Chicago a cappella has recorded nine CDs, including releases on the Centaur, Cedille, and Gothic labels, and has commissioned new works from acclaimed composers including Chen Yi, Rollo Dilworth, Tania León, and Joseph Jennings. The ensemble has performed on tour in 13 American states and in Mexico and has made appearances at The Ravinia Festival, the Chicago Humanities Festival, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

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Kathryn Kamp .............................................................. Soprano (Holidays; Love Stories; History of Rock and Soul Part 2)
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Kristin Lelm ..................................................................... Mezzo (Funny, That Doesn’t Sound Jewish)
Chelsea Lyons ................................................................... Mezzo (Holidays a cappella)
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Sarah Ponder ...................................................................... Mezzo (Funny, That Doesn’t Sound Jewish; History of Rock and Soul Part 2)
Emily Price ......................................................................... Mezzo (Funny, That Doesn’t Sound Jewish; Love Stories; History of Rock and Soul Part 2)

BIOGRAPHIES

Megan Bell, soprano
Megan Bell, soprano, works regularly with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, and Chicago a cappella. She received her Bachelor of Music degree from the Eastman School of Music and her Master of Music degree from Bowling Green State University. Ms. Bell is an award winner and member of The Musicians Club of Women. She loves to perform recitals, especially chamber music recitals with her father, Richard Bell, a cellist in Kansas City. She also sings weekly as the soloist for the First Church of Christian Scientists in Barrington. Ms. Bell lives in Elgin, with her husband and two young children. She is the Leader of Fox Valley Attachment Parenting International, and an active member of Traditional Nutrition, and GIFT Homeschool Coop.

Ryan Cox, bass
Ryan Cox has been a professional member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Grant Park Choruses since 2003. He was the baritone soloist in William Schuman’s A
Funny, That Doesn't Sound Jewish

Free Song for Grant Park Music Festival’s “Pulitzer Project,” recorded by the Cedille label. He sang Schubert lieder on the CSO Chamber Music Series and has been featured on the Music Now series, singing the Chicago premiere of Mason Bates’ Sirens. He made his debut with the Chicago Ensemble singing Fauré’s La bonne chanson. Other solo appearances include Haydn’s Lord Nelson Mass, Handel’s Messiah, the Fauré, Brahms and Mozart Requiem, Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, and several Bach cantatas. Operatic roles include Guglielmo in Così fan tutte, the Count in La Nozze di Figaro and the title role in Gianni Schicchi. As a boy soprano, Ryan was the soloist in Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Michael Tilson-Thomas. A graduate of Millikin University, Ryan is the music director at First Congregational Church in LaGrange, Illinois.

Katarzyna Dorula, soprano

Katarzyna Dorula, soprano, a native of Poland and a Chicago resident since 1991, received her MA in conducting from the Krakow Bach Academy and performed numerous times under Krzysztof Penderecki and Helmut Rilling, including live, televised performance of Weihnachtsoratorium. For the last 25 years she’s been performing with the Lira Ensemble, the only professional group in the US specializing in Polish music, song and dance. In the fall of 2006 she made her Orchestra Hall solo debut with the Lira Ensemble singing a Paderewski selection from his opera Manru. Miss Dorula has also performed annually with Chorus Angelorum, and for the past 16 seasons she is a proud member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She is very excited to be making her debut with the Chicago a cappella.

Garrett Johannsen, tenor

Garrett Johannsen is proud to be singing in his seventh season with Chicago a cappella! Originally from Schiller Park, Illinois, Garrett graduated from the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. His career highlights include multiple summer tours in the UK with Chamber Opera Chicago performing Jane Austen’s Persuasion, Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana at Carnegie Hall with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, a Nederlander Centennial medley performance at Millennium Park’s Jay Pritzker Pavilion and soloist performances with the Elgin, Elmhurst, and Waukegan Symphonies. He has performed with the Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony and Grant Park Choruses, Bella Voce and The William Ferris Chorale. He has also performed in many operas, recitals, cabarets and city wide events. Garrett is a member of the Actors’ Equity Association and the American Guild of Musical Artists. You can follow Garrett at www.garrettjohannsen.com.

Joe Labozetta, bass

Since joining Chicago a cappella’s roster in 2011, baritone Joe Labozetta has taken great pleasure in singing with such esteemed colleagues. A career ensemble musician, he also has an instrumental background. Although perfectly content at a keyboard or holding a guitar or bass, small-ensemble choral music is what Joe most enjoys. Beginning as a boy soprano with the Grammy-recognized Ragazzi Boys’ Chorus in northern California, he has continued to pursue every choral niche, especially the obscure and exotic. Some of his stylistic interests are: vocal jazz, Renaissance polyphony, overtone-singing, vocal percussion, and traditional Georgian folksong. A graduate of DePaul University’s...
School of Music, Joe currently holds the position of Director of Music at St. Josaphat Church in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago. When not directing church choirs and ensembles, composing hymnody, or flailing away on the pipe organ, he regularly sings with Chicago-based performing ensembles. He has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Chorus, Bella Voce, William Ferris Chorale, Ensemble Alioni, His Majesty’s Men, The Rookery, and Schola Antiqua.

Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee, bass

Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee is honored and excited to be singing with Chicago a cappella. Born in Korea and raised part-time in the United States, Chaz currently resides in Hyde Park where he studies musicology at the University of Chicago. His research explores the interplay between Romantic aesthetics and neoliberal political economy in contemporary instrumental soundtracks and easy listening. Parallel to his life as an instructor and student at the University, he has performed with a variety of ensembles as a conductor, pianist, percussionist, and vocalist. As a choral musician, Chaz can be heard singing with other Chicago-area groups such as the Grant Park Chorus, the Rockefeller Chapel Choir and Decani, Bella Voce, Schola Antiqua, and the Rookery Men’s Choir. In between dissertation-writing and rehearsals, Chaz can be heard singing along to Disney movies, Peter, Paul, and Mary, and the Backstreet Boys, which form the solid bedrock of his musical education.

Kristin Lelm, soprano

Kristin Lelm, soprano, received her Masters of Music Degree in Vocal Performance at DePaul University. She currently is a tenured member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus and has also performed with the Grant Park Chorus, Ravinia Music Festival, events such Ronald McDonald House Charities, TCW Magazine Foundation, LOFT Recital series, both in Chicago and Minneapolis. She is making her debut with Chicago a cappella. Kristin has been a featured soprano soloist for Peoria’s “Sing-It-Yourself Messiah,” Peoria’s Annual Bach Festival, Peoria Municipal Band, and with the Peoria Symphony Orchestra. She has recently been known to sing as “The Lady in White” for John Phillip Sousa based concerts, which has led her to sing with the Danish military brass band Slesvigske Musikkorps, and the Queen’s Royal Guard Band, Den Kongelige Livgarde, in Denmark.

Trevor Mitchell, tenor

Trevor Mitchell’s career has taken him across the U.S. as well as to Austria, Italy, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and other destinations in Europe. Recently audiences heard him in Bach’s B-Minor Mass, Weihachts-Oratorium, St. Matthew Passion, and St. John Passion, Britten’s Serenade for Tenor, Mozart’s Requiem, Beethoven’s Missa Solemnis, Vivaldi’s Beatus Vir, Handel’s Judas Maccabaeus and Messiah, and in recital. Trevor will sing a concert version of the Handel operas Semele and Ariodante in 2017 and 2018 respectively. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch described Trevor’s voice as a «large and remarkably sweet sound.» And, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel wrote about his “...warm sound and technical ease.” Trevor, who has frequently performed on WFMT (Chicago), has recorded albums with Cedille Records, Gothic Records, and is a featured soloist on a recent Sony Classical release of Mozart’s Coronation Mass with the Choirs and Orchestra of St. John Cantius.
Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano
Sarah Ponder, mezzo-soprano enjoys a busy career as a soloist and ensemble singer in Chicago, performing in genres from opera and oratorio to contemporary and a cappella. Hailed as “Deeply expressive” (Chicago Sun Times) and a “first-class soloist” (Chicago Classical Review), some of Sarah’s recent favorite performances include a special concert of love songs with Bella Voce Camerata, starring as Julia Child in Lee Hoiby’s one-woman opera, Bon Appétit! and a rousing trio rendition of “Row, Row Your Boat” with Yo-Yo Ma at Children’s Memorial Hospital as part of her work with the Citizen Musician Initiative. Through her outreach at Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Sarah has also “beguilingly” (Chicago Tribune) performed several solo concerts with famed Maestro Riccardo Muti at the piano. A passionate educator, Sarah holds a teaching position at Loyola University and maintains a large private studio. She also recently finished recording a 4th season of works from Carnegie Hall’s Lullaby Project partnered with the CSO, assisting young mothers to create original lullabies.

Emily Price, mezzo-soprano
Emily Price is a graduate of Northwestern University and enjoys performing in opera, choral and musical theater productions. In Chicago she sings with the Grant Park Chorus, Music of the Baroque and Lyric Opera. Internationally, she has performed in over 35 countries as a soloist with the Voices of Baha International Choir in venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Vienna Konzerthaus, and the National Theaters of Spain, Catalonia, and India. She has also performed with the Czech National Symphony, Budapest Symphony Orchestra, and the Warsaw Philharmonic. Favorite theater productions include the premiere of RESPECT! A Musical Journey of Women (Cuillo Center/CCPA) and Rona in The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee (Drury Lane Watertower). She can be heard on a number of recordings, including The Voices of Baha at Carnegie Hall, RESPECT! The Original Cast Album, and a solo album to be released entitled Songs of the Nightingale with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Jonathan Miller, Founder and Artistic Director
Jonathan Miller created Chicago a cappella in 1993 to give accomplished ensemble singers an experience of performing eclectic and exciting repertoire and to share the resulting beauty with the world. A champion of innovative programming, Jonathan has been the group’s driving artistic force through more than 300 performances and nine commercial CD releases, work which was recognized with the 2008 Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal from Chorus America. When Jonathan was a teenage bass in the Chicago Children’s Choir, he was bitten hard by the choral bug. He was fortunate to be exposed to a wide range of repertoire by a remarkable group of mentors, including Christopher Moore, Lena McLin, Max Janowski, Howard Mayer Brown, Richard Proulx, John Nygro, and Anne Heider. Eager to learn research tools for choral music, Jonathan earned his doctorate in historical musicology at UNC-Chapel Hill. After returning to the Chicago area, Jonathan led the choir at Unity Temple in Oak Park for nine years and began composing new choral music while serving there. He has written more than 75 choral works in a variety of genres and languages, on the poetry of such writers as Mark Jarman, Peter Watson Jenkins, and Leonard Cohen; his music has been sung
at venues including St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Pentagon. His mashup “Jingle Bells Hallelujah (Chorus)” is a minor hit, and his series of Wacky Christmas Carols continues to mix words and tunes in new combinations. He also is a leading figure in Jewish choral music, active as composer, cantor, conductor, and producer. He serves as high-holiday cantor at Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood. He conducted the Janowski Centenary Concert at K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation, also in Hyde Park, in 2012; he received the Perelmuter Award at KAMII in 2013; and he was Scholar-in-Residence at Lakeside Congregation (Highland Park, IL) in 2014. He is the host for the new broadcast, “A Chanukah Celebration with Chicago a cappella,” on the WFMT Fine Arts Network. An enthusiastic auctioneer for charity events, Jonathan serves as Director of Choral Catalog (and in-house choral arranger) at Musicnotes.com and is a former board member of Chorus America.

John William Trotter, Principal Music Director Conductor John William Trotter interacts with musicians and audiences to celebrate the gift of music and its powerful place in human identity.

He has conducted more than a dozen professional choirs and orchestras on three continents, and studies and teaches widely in the areas of music, leadership, and the role of the arts in society. He is widely active as a guest conductor, composer/arranger, educator, and speaker. In addition, he serves as Principal Music Director of the professional ensemble Chicago a cappella and Associate Professor at the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music. Trotter’s performances of concert music have attracted special attention for their freshness and authenticity. Performances with Chicago a cappella (described by the Chicago Tribune as “The city’s liveliest, most versatile vocal ensemble”), and the Vancouver Chamber Choir (where his Vivaldi Magnificat was hailed by the Vancouver Sun as “a radiant performance of this work that overstated nothing and brought out all of its freshness and charm.”) have been broadcast throughout North America on NPR and CBC. Trotter’s various ensembles have been honored with invitations to perform live at national, regional, and state conventions of the American Choral Directors’ Association, Chorus America, and the National Association for Music Education. In 2017, Trotter led the Wheaton College Concert Choir on tour throughout South Korea, conducting twenty performances including several broadcasts. Over the past several years, the ensemble has become recognized for their innovative approach to masterworks, such as their semi-staged production of Handel’s Messiah, exploration of interdisciplinary collaborations with dancers, painters, and actors, and direct engagement with audiences in concert halls, homeless shelters, and with hundreds of inmates at a state prison. Prior to his work with Chicago a cappella, Trotter earned the Doctorate in Conducting from the University of Michigan (the top-ranked conducting program in North America) and undertook further advanced studies with Eric Ericson, Helmuth Rilling, Andrew Parrott, and Jon Washburn. He now trains young conductors and serves as a resource to mid-careers professionals through conference presentations and intensive workshops. His conducting students have distinguished themselves by taking up significant positions, gaining entrance to the top-ranked graduate programs in North America, and earning national recognition at the ACDA Student Conducting Competition. Trotter is well known for his ability to connect with audiences and for his interest in building bridges between the professional music world, music training institutions, and the wider community. An experienced improviser, he is an advocate for the recovery of this musical skill among amateurs and professionals alike. His
activities now range from choral/orchestral masterworks, jazz, new music and film score recording to work as a consultant, clinician, adjudicator, conducting teacher, composer/arranger, writer, speaker, and leader of improvisation workshops.  

(www.johnwilliamtrotter.com)

Matthew Greenberg, Executive Director
Matt Greenberg has served as Chicago a cappella's Executive Director for 22 seasons. Under his leadership, Chicago a cappella has grown from a founder-based startup to a well-recognized and highly-respected arts organization with broad community support, robust educational outreach programs, a loyal audience base, a strategic plan, and a solid infrastructure. He is a champion of consistent branding and a high level of professionalism in all areas of operations, and he has guided Chicago a cappella to be regarded as a leader among organizations in the Chicago choral community. Among his key accomplishments include 15 years of successful gala fundraisers, the establishment of two cash reserves, a multi-year pledge program that has brought in over $150,000 to date, and marketing campaigns which have increased the ensemble's subscription base by 75% in the last five years. Matt has led workshops for Chorus America and the Arts and Business Council of Chicago and has served as a panelist for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs granting programs. He received his degree in music/business from DePauw University, worked at the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and performed with the Santa Fe Desert Chorale prior to launching his career in Chicago.

ENSEMBLE MEMBER UPDATE

Ace Gangoso (tenor) is performing with the Chicago Symphony Chorus singing sacred masterworks by Poulenc and Gounod (Oct. 5-7) and leading rehearsals as the director of Chicago a cappella's High School Intern Ensemble. He is also settling into his new post as Director of Music at St. Nicholas Parish in Evanston.

Kathryn Kamp (soprano) is taking a short break from singing to focus on other pursuits and is looking forward to returning for the rest of the season at Chicago a cappella as well as performances with the Chicago Symphony Chorus.

Cari Plachy (soprano) is singing with the Chicago Symphony Chorus in October, as they present works by Poulenc and Gounod.

Get with the program.

Use #footlights on Instagram.
Chicago a cappella is a creative enterprise devoted to furthering the art of singing together without instruments. Founded in 1993, our classical vocal ensemble of professional singers moves the heart and spirit with fun, innovative concerts. Through our Chicago-area subscription series, guest appearances both locally and on tour, CD recordings and broadcast appearances, and educational and community outreach programming, we strive to enrich lives through music.

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Make a gift today! Ticket sales cover only a portion of our costs. In fact, as a nonprofit organization, our single largest source of revenue is the generosity of individual donors like you! Your tax-deductible gift supports our educational and artistic work and allows it to thrive and grow. Join our family of supporters by donating in the lobby, or online at chicagoacappella.org/support.

VOLUNTEER
Give the gift of time and talent! We often seek volunteers for office work and events, as well as for specialized skills such as music librarian, photography and videography, and more. To receive periodic emails about volunteer opportunities, contact Cait Williams at cwilliams@chicagoacappella.org or call 773-281-7820.

BOARD SERVICE
Our Board members are passionate individuals committed to guiding Chicago a cappella to its next stage of success. Each brings a unique skill, professional expertise, and personal and professional network, and all are deeply supportive of our mission. To learn more contact Matt Greenberg at mgreenberg@chicagoacappella.org.

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Chicago a cappella is honored to acknowledge members of The Accompanists, a group of donors who make three-year pledges in support of Chicago a cappella’s educational and artistic programs.

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You can help ensure the ongoing success of our musical and educational programs by including Chicago a cappella as part of your estate plan. Your commitment provides an opportunity for continued financial support without a current cost. Including Chicago a cappella in your estate planning can be done through any number of vehicles, including bequests, retirement plans, and life insurance.

For more information contact Matt Greenberg at (773) 281-7820 or visit chicagoacappella.org/support.
We offer our deep gratitude to our contributors who made gifts to the Chicago a cappella since July 1, 2016. We regret that we are unable to list the many thoughtful contributors who made gifts under $50. If this list contains an error, please accept our apologies and kindly let us know so that we may correct it.

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