Chicago, Chicago

Saturday, Oct. 6, 8:00 pm
The stage of the Pritzker Pavilion
201 E. Randolph St., Chicago

Sunday, Oct. 7, 4:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church
460 Lake St., Oak Park

Saturday, Oct. 20, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall
1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston

Sunday, Oct. 21, 4:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall
171 E. Chicago Ave., Naperville
on the campus of North Central College

Chicago a cappella

Megan Bell, Soprano
Kathryn Kamp, Soprano
Cari Plachy, Soprano
Tracie Davis, Mezzo-soprano
Emily Price, Mezzo-soprano
Garrett Johannsen, Tenor
Trevor Mitchell, Tenor
Ryan Cox, Bass
Michael Hawes, Bass
Jonathan Miller, Bass

Founder and Artistic Director
Jonathan Miller

Principal Music Director
John William Trotter

Guest Narrator
Geoffrey Baer

Script: Geoffrey Baer and Jonathan Miller
Projections: Chris Baer and Matt Greenberg
Technical Manager and Design Consultant: Joseph A. Burke

The Evanston performance is generously underwritten by Lawrence Hamilton and Ann Hicks

This program is supported by the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation; J + L Catering
Chicago a cappella is also supported by The MacArthur Funds for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation; The Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation; the Illinois Arts Council Agency; a CityArts Grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events; and the Oak Park Area Arts Council, in partnership with the Village of Oak Park and the National Endowment for the Arts. 98.7 WFMT is a media sponsor for Chicago, Chicago.
SAVE THE DATE
for Chicago a cappella’s Gala concert,
Hollywood a cappella

Friday, May 17, 2019
Venue West
221 N. Paulina St., Chicago, IL

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

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PROGRAM

Intro: Chicago (That Toddlin’ Town) .................................................. Fred Fisher, arr. Jonathan Miller

C’est l’aviron .................................................................................... Trad. French Canadian (17th-18th c.), arr. Miller

Shawneetown ................................................................. Ohio Valley folksong, arr. Bustin/Dalglish/Larsen/Miller

El-A-Noy ..................................................................................... Trad. Folksong, arr. Augustus Zanzig

City of Chicago ................................................................. Barry Moore, arr. Nick Page

Die Wollust in den Maien ............................................................. Johannes Brahms

Follow the Drinking Gourd ........................................................... African-American folksong, arr. Allan Koepke

Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier ........................................................ Trad. folksong, arr. Shaw/Parker

America the Beautiful . . . . Poem: Katherine Lee Bates; music: Samuel Ward; arr. Deke Sharon

The Song of the Ferris Wheel ....................................................... Sturges/Schleiffarth, arr. Miller

Chicago (That Toddlin’ Town) ........................................................ Fred Fisher, arr. Miller

INTERMISSION

Prayers of Steel ............................................................... Poem: Carl Sandburg; music: Jerry J. Troxell (1936-1998)

This Train ........................................................................................... Spiritual, arr. Gwyneth Walker

Chicago Bound Blues ......................................................................... Lovie Austin, arr. Miller

Las Mañanitas .................................................................................. Trad. Mexican folksong, arr. Ramón Noble

Precious Lord .................................................................................... Thomas A. Dorsey, arr. Arnold Sevier

Góralu, czy ci nie żał ........................................................................... trad. Polish folksong, arr. Jacek Sykulski

Sweet Home Chicago ........................................................................ Robert Johnson, arr. Patrick Sinozich

Take Me Out to the Ballgame ............................................................ Albert von Tilzer, Anne Heider

Opening night reception generously underwritten by
Je&L Catering, William Wilson, James Massie, and David Perlman.

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.
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

INTRODUCTION

I first set foot in this glorious city on August 30, 1971—my ninth birthday—when our Chrysler Newport and our moving van pulled up at a married-student-housing apartment in Hyde Park, my family’s first home here. I remember getting a Chinese checkers game set as a present that day. A year prior, we had moved from Brookline, Massachusetts to Richmond, Indiana, for what had been a relatively bucolic year, during which both of my parents were in graduate school. While they would continue in grad school upon our arrival in Chicago, little else in our lives would display a similar continuity. Playing Chinese checkers with my older sister and little brother that day, I had little inkling of how completely my life would change as a result of this encounter with this tremendous city.

* * * * * * *

The Chicago Children’s Choir and the Jewish Community Center were the first two after-school places where I started to find what felt like peer groups. K.A.M. Isaiah Israel Congregation would become the place for Sunday and Hebrew school, though being in synagogue didn’t keep me from being bullied. It took a few more years to develop a thicker skin.

It was in the Chicago Children’s Choir that I not only found what personally felt like my first real “tribe” in the big city—that of fellow singers—but also developed the beginning of a sense of belonging in a line (or many lines) of history. One of the songs found early on this concert is “El-A-Noy,” a quaint and funny song about settling here in the 19th century. The CCC was the first place I ever heard or sang it.

As years went by and I became more confident in my own skin and in my adopted city, features about Chicago—“city things”—came to excite and embolden me. My parents gave me a wide berth to explore, permission for which I am deeply grateful. I fell in love with public transportation, riding on CTA “Supertransfers” all day on summer Sundays. I was pleased that I could handle myself in a wide variety of situations. These included riding the 47th Street bus without getting mugged; walking down Michigan Avenue all by myself with the wind in my hair on a beautifully crisp fall afternoon; hanging out at Pacific Stereo on Oak Street—where I would listen to dozens of different speakers, amps, tuners, and LP needles, in the company of the most patient salesman a teenage boy could have known. (I did eventually buy my first complete stereo system from him, at age 13, for what was my life’s savings up to that point.)

I developed pride for living in a multi-racial city where people got along remarkably well. I fell in love with our great buildings and the skyline that visually defines us to the rest of the world. I took a course at the Chicago Architecture Foundation during my senior year in high school, and I got my start as a singer right here with Chris Moore, Lena McLin, Max Janowski and Richard Proulx. How can a singer be more blessed than that? I have now lived in Chicago for 37 of my 56 years, and I feel lucky indeed to be here. (And although I would not have admitted it while in high school or college: yes, the suburbs do count if you say you’re from Chicago.)

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CONT.

We first created “Chicago, Chicago” in 2011. Then as now, it has been a joy to fall in love with our amazing city all over again. This time, we are excited to add visual projections to further illuminate the city’s history. We also are most fortunate to work with Geoffrey Baer, himself a walking encyclopedia of Chicago. His insights have been a huge help in our rethinking of this show for its current version.

Not much of the repertoire on this show is very high-brow. That’s our town for you. Even with its fancy people, glorious restaurants and architecture, world-class theatre and classical music and creature comforts, Chicago has always been a sort of rough-and-tumble place. It’s a crossroads of trade and transportation, of people coming and going, always in flux. Nine million people in a metropolitan area will naturally have differing skin colors, agendas, traditions and values, and we aren’t going to agree on everything. That is part of why it is fun to live in Chicago.

Thank you for being here. Enjoy the show.
—Jonathan Miller
Intro:  *Chicago (That Toddlin' Town)*
Fred Fisher, arr. Jonathan Miller
We give you just a taste here of the song made famous by Frank Sinatra and others. See below for the full text and fuller program notes.

**SETTLING THE “GREAT WEST”**

*Trad. French-Canadian folksong, arr. Jonathan Miller : C’est l’aviron*

“Michilimackinac” was the name given by local First Nation tribes to the area where Lake Michigan meets Lake Huron—at the northern end of what is now called the state of Michigan. It was a central jumping-off point for canoe trips further inland to Illinois, Wisconsin and points west and south (such as Missouri). In use as early as the late 1600s, this tune is said to have been the most popular song among the French traders who plied the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River in pursuit of the fur trade. First Nation trappers would trap beaver pelt, which was the top prize, valued primarily for use in hat-making. In exchange for beaver pelt, the Native Americans received the goods they valued from Europeans, such as brass kettles and iron tools.

The main point behind this song is that “it’s the paddle” that “takes us up.” The direction of “up” refers to the trip from “lower Canada” (Toronto, Montreal, and similar points) to “upper Canada” (the Great Lakes and beyond). The rhythm easily suggests a work song. If you’ve ever paddled a canoe, see if you can imagine moving the paddle through water and air to the beat of the song.

*M’en revenant de la jolie Rochelle recontré trios jolies demoiselles.

REFRAIN:
C’est l’aviron qui nous mène, qui nous mène
C’est l’aviron qui nous mène en haut.

J’ai recontré trios jolies demoiselles
J’ai point choisi, mai j’ai pris la plus belle.

Au bout d’cent lieues, ell’ me d’mandit à boire
Je l’ai menée auprès d’une fontaine.

J’y fit monter derrière moi, sur ma selle
J’y fis cent lieues sans parler avec elle.

Quand ell’ fut là, ell’ ne voulut point boire
Je l’ai menée au logis de son père.

Quand ell’ fut là, ell’ buvait à pleins verres
À la Santé de son père et sa mère.
À la Santé de ses soeurs et ses frères.
À la Santé d’celui que son coeur aime.

*—trans. J. Miller*
NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER cont.


This is a song about keelboats going up and down the Ohio River in the vicinity of far southern Illinois. In the late 1700s and early 1800s, before the Illinois and Michigan Canal opened up travel between Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River, the main entry point to Illinois was downstate. Folksinger Dillon Bustin gives most of the background to this song:

Shawneetown (also known as Shawnee Ferry) is a point on the Illinois side of the Ohio River, just downriver from the junction with the Wabash. It was the first Anglo settlement on the Ohio and, before 1830, was the major trade point between Native Americans and the new settlers. Salt mines nearby provided the area’s main trading commodity, as the “rock salt” in the song’s lyrics tell.

The easiest way to get to Shawneetown for trading was to float downstream. However, if one were a trader, it was necessary to also get upstream to keep goods flowing in both directions. Rafts and flatboats were almost impossible to get back upstream. By contrast, a strong crew and “beech oars” would literally pull the keelboat back upstream, a process called “bushwhacking” or “cordelling.” In the era before steam power and dams, the downstream trip of a few weeks between Cincinnati and New Orleans was contrasted with the several months that it took to get back. The beech oar was a long oar that helped on downstream trips to guide the boat and keep it off mudsicks and snags.

As with C'est l'aviron, you couldn't do the work of river-based trade without some terrific paddles, so the men would have to paddle “hard on the beech oar.” Also, Emily Jaycox of the Missouri Historical Society confirms that it was not unusual indeed for a man to have several families in different places along the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers!


The Midwest would never have been settled without “boosters,” people whose job it was to convince Easterners to bring their money, their families, and their talents and ambitions to the “Great West.” One way that they spread the “gospel” of westward migration was through songs, sort of like motivational pep talks to make you want to go somewhere new. This song is both quaint and vigorous, causing the singer and listener to want to spring up and move to El-A-Noy. (You are encouraged to pay special attention to the verse about the Queen of Sheba visiting our state—it’s hilarious.) A fourth verse, added later, suggests in the chorus, “Then move your family westward, bring all your girls and boys/ And cross at Shawnee Ferry to the State of El-A-Noy.”

* * * * * * *

FIRST-WAVE IMMIGRANTS: BUILDING A CITY

Barry Moore, arr. Nick Page: City of Chicago

The Irish first came to Chicago in the 1830s and were associated early on with the building of the I&M Canal (1836-1848). The potato crop failures that started in 1845 drove 1.5 million Irish to emigrate, and Chicago was a popular destination. The journey was not easy, borne as it was of the urgency to eat; Irish women often traveled in groups apart from the rest of their families, in contrast to the more intact families of German, Jewish, Polish, and Italian immigrants.
The difficult journey of the Irish to Chicago is documented in this sad and moving song by an Irish songwriter, Barry Moore, who hails from Newbridge, County Kildare, Ireland. Barry changed his name to Luka Bloom to get out of the shadow of his more famous singer brother, Christy Moore. Luka has developed quite a following in his own right, and *City of Chicago* is probably his best-known song. (You can see and hear more about Luka Bloom at www.lukabloom.com.) The choral arrangement is by Boston’s Nick Page.

**Johannes Brahms: *Die Wollust in den Maien***

Germans were an important early immigrant group to Chicago, taking prominent roles especially on the North and Northwest Sides. Michael Diversey was a leading German who was alderman of the Sixth Ward in the 1840s. Between 1850 and 1900, Germans were the largest single ethnic group in Chicago. Not only did they make up one-sixth of the population in 1850, but in 1900, a full 470,000 Chicago residents were either born in Germany or had at least one parent who was. German was being taught in Chicago Public Schools by 1870. The posh Germania Club in Lincoln Park was founded in 1865 by the city’s German elite. Lincoln Square, anchored by the venerable Merz Apothecary, is the Chicago neighborhood with the strongest German character at the present time.

Concerts and other musical activities serve to strengthen ethnic identity, and the Germans were particularly strong in this area. Singing societies would have performed partsongs much like this one by Brahms, composed with amateur singers in mind.

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Die Wollust in den Maien,
die Zeit hat Freuden bracht.  
die Blümlein mancherleien,  
ein jeglichs nach sein’r G’stalt:  
das sind die roten Röselein,  
der Feyl, der grüne Klee;  
von herzer Liebe scheiden, das tut weh.

Der Vögelein Gesange  
die Zeit hat Freuden bracht,  
 ihr Lieb tät mich bezwingen,  
 freundlich sie zu mir sprach:  
 Sollt, schönes Lieb, ich fragen dich,  
 wollst fein berichten mich.  
 Genad mir, schöne Frauen, so sprach ich.

Nach manchem Seufzer schwere  
komm ich wohl wieder dar,  
nach Jammer und nach Leide  
 seh ich dein Äuglein klar.  
 Ich bitt dich, Auserwählte mein,  
 laß dir befohlen sein  
 das treue, junge Herze, das Herze mein.  
—Traditional Folk Song

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Spring passion in May,  
the season has brought great joy.  
The flowers blossom,  
each after its own shape:  
These include the little red roses,  
the violet and the green clover;  
But they separate me from my dear love, which makes me sad.

The songs of the little birds  
in season bring me joy,  
Because I was conquered by love  
when she said to me:  
“If, beautiful one, I were to ask of you,  
would you tell me of your love?”  
“Certainly, my dear, I’d tell you of my love:”

“After these many arduous trials of misery and sorrow,  
I will return to see your sincere little eyes.  
I ask you, my chosen one,  
let yourself be influenced  
By my young true heart.”

—trans. Courtesy of UC Davis Dept. of Music  
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CIVIL WAR AND SLAVERY


Historian Glennette Tilley Turner is the leading scholar of the Underground Railroad in Illinois. She notes that Chicago was a hotbed of antislavery activity. Many routes on the Underground Railroad originated in Illinois towns bordering the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers; most of these ended in Chicago. Before the divisive Fugitive Slave Law was passed in 1850, Illinois was mostly hospitable to runaway slaves; after 1850, by contrast, slavecatchers or “pattyrollers” (patrollers) would capture black people, even if they had certificates of freedom.

Getting across the Ohio River is the topic of this well-known song. The coded language tells slaves how to maintain a northern bearing: the “drinking gourd” in the chorus and every verse is the Big Dipper, whose pointer stars lead you to the North Star. The verses describe the journey that a runaway slave would take from Mobile, Alabama northward. The path leads through northeastern Mississippi and Tennessee toward Paducah, Kentucky, where the river crossing into Illinois would take place. The “old man” is reputedly a friendly boat operator and former sailor named Peg Leg Joe, who would mark the final part of the path with his “peg foot” and ferry slaves across the river to freedom. Allen Koepke’s vigorous choral arrangement is texturally thick, perhaps a subtle reminder that the perilous journey was through densely forested, unfamiliar territory.

*Trad. folksong, arr. Alice Parker and Robert Shaw: Johnny Has Gone for a Soldier*

This haunting tune originated in England and has been all over the Atlantic seaboard, being adopted and adapted by various ethnic and cultural groups. One version was popular during the American Revolutionary War and begins with the lyrics “Here I sit on Buttermilk Hill / Who can blame me cryin’ my fill.” The tune also made it into an Irish version, spelled in English “Shule Aroon”; all the versions talk of the sacrifices that must be made when men go into war. This version by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw shows Alice Parker at her best, using her typically understated technique to layer voice parts underneath the plaintive solo line.

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*Katherine Lee Bates and Samuel Ward, arr. Deke Sharon: America, the Beautiful*

Katherine Lee Bates was a college professor from New England and a tremendously prolific author and editor. On her way to teach a summer course at Colorado College in 1893, she passed through Chicago, where she seems to have seen the “White City” of the great Columbian Exposition. Upon her arrival in Colorado, she wrote the poem that would become our unofficial second national anthem, which she originally titled “Pike's Peak.” Evidently, the impression that the White City made on her was the inspiration for her mentioning “alabaster cities’ gleam,” a memorable and unusual line. The poem was not originally paired with the now-famous music by Samuel Ward; common practice of the time was to interchange lyrics with different tunes and vice versa. Ward's music was originally a hymn, and the now-classic text and tune were not published together until 1905.
M. A. Sturges/George Schleiffarth, arr. J. Miller: *The Song of the Ferris Wheel*

As the Eiffel Tower is to France, the Ferris Wheel was to Chicago at the Columbian Exposition—an iconic symbol of progress, ingenuity, and prosperity. It was also a point of great civic pride. At least three different songs were written in honor of the Ferris Wheel. This one is particularly charming, printed with a dashing photo of Mr. Ferris himself on the front cover. The composer, one George Schleiffarth, also wrote the well-received comic opera *Rosita*, a “south-of-the-border musical” that premiered in Chicago in 1884 and also had a run in Brooklyn.

Fred Fisher, arr. Jonathan Miller: *Chicago (That Toddlin’ Town)*

Frank Sinatra made the refrain of this song hugely popular. However, as is often the case with older songs, most of the lyrics are packed into sections that we usually never hear. The song has a racier character than we have become used to, as it sings over and over again of people dancing anywhere and anytime they possibly can. We must also acknowledge that the values of the time provided for a no-longer-used word in the “patter” section. (If anyone knows what the phrase “cop a Flo” means, we would be grateful to hear it; our current guess is that it refers to dancing, as a reference to “Flo” or Florenz Ziegfeld of the Follies.) True to the archetype of the American Immigrant, songwriter Fred Fisher (1875-1942) was born in Germany. He started his songwriting career in Chicago after moving here in 1900. He ended up in New York City, creating a successful run of hits that included, of course, songs about being Irish!

I got a gal, I got a pal,  
I got a chance, I got a dance,  
waiting for me.  
I’m going to make, right to the lake,  
There with the boys, in Illinois,  
I want to be.  

You may not care, for to be there,  
But I declare, you’re not aware,  
Just where to go.  
When you’re in town, just call around,  
Right there I’m found, really you ought to know:

**CHORUS:**
Chicago, Chicago, that toddlin’ town  
Chicago, Chicago, I’ll show you around.  
I love it!  
Bet your bottom dollar  
You lose the blues in Chicago, Chicago,  
The town that Billy Sunday could not shut down.  
I just want to say,  
they do things  
they don’t do on Broadway.  

Say, they have the time, the time of their life.  
I saw a man he danced with his wife in Chicago,  
Chicago, my home town.  

I got a maid, who’s not afraid  
Powders her nose, puts on nice clothes,  
She’ll get a beau.  
Any old guy, over in Chi,  
He’s got a chance, if he can dance,
NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER CONT.

He’ll cop a Flo.
Any hotel, that’s a bit swell,
Must have a band, right here on hand
Or else they’re cheap.
If you’ll invest, you’ll find a guest,
They’ll never rest, they’re dancing while they sleep.

CHORUS
“Patter”:
In “College Inn” you get the real beer in a glass,
In that college from Professors, you learn to jazz,
More colored people up in State Street you can see,
Than you’ll see in Louisiana, or Tennessee,
They’ve got the “Stock Yards” so I heard the people say,
I just got wind of it today.
—Fred Fisher, 1922
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INTERMISSION

Copernicus Center | Polish Splendor: Songs and Traditions from the Crossroads of Europe | Feb. 17, 2019
Our final performance of Polish Splendor takes place at the Copernicus Center on Chicago’s northwest side. Originally a movie palace from 1930, this gorgeous auditorium now serves as the city’s premiere Polish cultural center.

Lincoln Hall | Dynamic Duos: The Greatest Musical Partnerships | April 14, 2019
Due to overwhelming popular demand, we return to the trendy Lincoln Park nightclub Lincoln Hall for the final performance of Dynamic Duos. Enjoy drinks and snacks throughout the concert from the Lincoln Hall bar and a casual lounge experience in this fresh venue. Doors open at 5:00 pm for dinner and drinks in the in-house restaurant. Theater style seating is available on the main floor, and cocktail seating is available on the balcony. Whether you sit on the main floor or mingle at a table, it’s a true nightclub experience you won’t forget.
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Holidays a cappella: Silver Bells
Chicago a cappella has celebrated the holidays with you for a quarter of a century, and now we'll ring in our Silver Anniversary with a sparkling collection of musical treasures. Together we'll relish in bright and beloved favorites from our first 25 years —from lively Christmas spirituals to timeless holiday chestnuts and contemporary favorites. Join us as we look ahead with glistening music both familiar and new to our stage. This resounding celebration is a Chicago family tradition: make Chicago a cappella a part of your holiday season!

Oak Park
Friday, Dec. 7, 8:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

Evanston
Saturday, Dec. 8, 8:00 pm
&
Sunday, Dec. 16, 3:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Chicago (Lincoln Park)
Sunday, Dec. 9, 3:00 pm
St. Clement Church

Chicago (Gold Coast)
Friday, Dec. 14, 8:00 pm
Fourth Presbyterian Church

Naperville
Saturday, Dec. 15, 8:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall
on the campus of North Central College

Polish Splendor: Songs and Traditions from the Crossroads of Europe
Chicago's celebrated Polish community is a vital part of our city's spirit. In this concert, years in the making, Chicago a cappella explores the rich variety of Polish music, both contemporary and timeless. The acclaimed singers will bring to life traditional folk songs and compelling new works by rising Polish composers—including many in their North American debut. This captivating musical celebration of Poland is not to be missed!

Evanston
Saturday, Feb. 9, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Oak Park
Sunday, Feb. 10, 4:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

Naperville
Saturday, Feb. 16, 8:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall
on the campus of North Central College

Chicago
Sunday, Feb. 17, 4:00 pm
Copernicus Center

Dynamic Duos: The Greatest Musical Partnerships
From classical to classic rock and pop, musical theater and opera, Chicago a cappella shines a spotlight on your favorite songwriting and performing duos from, well, the past few hundred years or so. Where else could you find Mozart and Da Ponte, Stan Getz and Astrud Gilberto, Elton John and Bernie Taupin, Gilbert and Sullivan, Simon and Garfunkel, George and Ira Gershwin, and the Captain and Tennille all in the same room? Veteran pop-arranger Paul Langford returns, providing rich and energetic music direction to new arrangements of your favorite musical partners.

Naperville
Friday, April 5, 8:00 pm
Wentz Concert Hall
on the campus of North Central College

Oak Park
Sunday, April 7, 4:00 pm
Pilgrim Congregational Church

Evanston
Saturday, April 13, 8:00 pm
Nichols Concert Hall

Chicago (Lincoln Park)
Sunday, April 14, 7:30 pm
Lincoln Hall

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**NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER cont.**

Carl Sandburg / Jerry J. Troxell: *Prayers of Steel*

We often hear people speaking with awe at Chicago’s skyscrapers, yet we rarely hear that awe expressed in song. Carl Sandburg wrote a poignant ode to skyscrapers in his poem “Prayers of Steel,” published in the groundbreaking collection *Cornhuskers*. That book earned Sandburg the first of his three Pulitzer Prizes and contains the iconic poem “Chicago,” which begins with the well-known line “City of the Big Shoulders…” The music created by Jerry Troxell is a haunting, meditative work, considered his most perfect piece of music. Troxell was a saxophonist and teacher of reeds, a professor at St. Louis University, church musician, and gifted composer who spent time in Chicago following his graduate work at Sangamon State (now U of I-Springfield). With its slightly angular character and stark harmonic style, the composition perfectly illuminates and captures Sandburg’s awe at beholding the stark urban beauty of Chicago’s new downtown area.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.
—Carl Sandburg, from *Cornhuskers*

Public Domain

*For the record:* Jerry J. Troxell’s “Prayers of Steel” appears on Chicago a cappella’s CD *Electric.*
Spiritual, arr. Gwyneth Walker: This Train
After her training as a composer and teaching at Oberlin Conservatory, Gwyneth Walker retired from academia and has been a full-time composer for more than thirty-five years. With a strong theatrical sense, she has been writing solo vocal, choral, and instrumental works that bring texts to life in unusual and striking ways. She employs unexpected and effective elements to create maximum emotional effect. For This Train, Walker brings the lyrics’ images to vivid life. In addition to playing with the “ssssss” sound at the end of the word “this,” she uses words like “stop,” “joker,” and “weary” as springboards for word-painting. The composer has also added a few new verses, noting:

“Additional lyrics have been added for contemporary relevance (“This train will stop at the ghetto...and at the factory door”). And new musical sections (“If you reach up, reach up to the sky...”) have been inserted to broaden the formal structure.”

Unusual musical devices used here include borrowings from traditional spirituals and the flashier-sounding settings by arrangers like Dawson and Hogan.

For the record: Gwyneth Walker’s “This Train” appears on Chicago a cappella’s CD Bound for Glory.

Lovie Austin, arr. Jonathan Miller: Chicago Bound Blues
The Great Migration of black Southerners to Chicago between World War I and 1970 was one of the largest movements of a people in history. As historian James Grossman (one of the editors of the Encyclopedia of Chicago) notes, the trains brought more than half a million African-Americans during this period from the Deep South—Mississippi in particular—to Chicago, where they sought economic alternatives to the Jim Crow realities of former slave states. World War I sparked the early part of this migration. With a combination of white soldiers being shipped to Europe, a new wartime demand for the manufactured goods made here, and the American borders basically closed to immigration, northern factories were in need of fresh labor. The Chicago Defender was the newspaper that told the black American community where the jobs were, what the issues were in each major city, and so on.

Of course, Mississippi-style blues made it to Chicago and became a defining influence on what would be known as Chicago blues. Twenty years before Muddy Waters came here, the T.O.B.A. (Theatre Owners Bookers Association) black vaudeville circuit was the place where singers like Bessie Smith would perform. A female musical giant in a field dominated by male music directors, Lovie Austin was a gifted pianist and composer on the T.O.B.A. circuit. Austin was the musical director at the Monogram Theater at 3453 South State Street. She led her own acts including her own “Blues Serenaders,” who accompanied many of the great singers of the age, including Ma Rainey and Ethel Waters.

In addition to her Chicago credits, Lovie Austin wrote some of the best-loved tunes for Bessie Smith, who recorded them in New York. In 1923, Smith laid down a phenomenal recording of Austin’s song, “Chicago Bound Blues.” The lyrics tell of a woman in the Deep South who wants to go to Chicago but is not on the train; her man went north without her, leaving her to die “down home” from the blues. The vocal chart here is a faithful transcription of the Bessie Smith recording, which featured piano and clarinet.
Trad. Mexican folksong, arr. Ramón Noble: Las Mañanitas

In Mexico, this tune is traditionally sung on birthdays and anniversaries and other festive occasions. Versions of the song have been collected at many locations in both Mexico and New Mexico. The song lyrics are sweet and tender; they even seem to have a slight reference to the Biblical love-lyrics in the Song of Songs, where in the final chapter the poet says, “Arise, my love; let us go into the garden.” This is the lush, glorious setting by Ramón Noble, who with Amelia Hernández founded the famous choir of the Ballet Folklórico de México and is one of the most important figures in Mexican choral music from the mid-20th century.

Estas son las mañanitas que cantaba el rey David
a las muchachas bonitas se las cantamos aquí,
Despierta mi bien despierta mira que ya amaneció.
Ya los pajarillos cantan la Luna ya se metió.
Si el sereno de la esquina me quisiéra hacer favor de apagar su linternita mientras que pasa mi amor.

These are the little songs of the morning sung by King David.
We sing them to all the pretty girls here.
Wake up, my love—awaken.
Look what has already risen.
The little birds are singing and the moon has already set.
If the nightwatchman on the corner would like to do me a favor, he could blow out the lantern while my love passes by.

—Traditional Mexican Song
Public Domain

Thomas A. Dorsey, arr. Arnold Sevier: Precious Lord

While it brought tremendous economic opportunity to hundreds of thousands, The Great Migration caused some conflicts within Chicago’s black community. “Old settlers” who had been in Chicago as early as the 1840s were not thrilled at having to rub elbows with less sophisticated recent arrivals, especially in church. This generational rift between educated and working-class subgroups has played out in similar fashion with immigrant populations in Chicago, from Chinese to Ukrainians and others; sometimes the educated elites come later, but the conflict is still there.

As Michael Harris notes in The Rise of Gospel Blues, Thomas Andrew Dorsey’s genius in shaping early gospel music lay in two areas. One was audible: namely, the musical fusion of more raw blues elements with weightier, classically-leaning stylistic features. The other, less blatantly audible but no less essential, was Dorsey’s recognition that the black Baptist church needed to be able to appeal to both the more recent migrants to Chicago, whose more ecstatic and charismatic styles constituted “storefront” worship, as well as the “old settlers” who were used to hearing Bach and Mozart on Sunday morning.

Like spirituals, the best gospel music has the quality of “the moan” inside it. A text cannot be overly cloying if it is to be successful; it must have an inner quality of sincerity and human struggle to balance the joyful, even ecstatic impulse that comes from the wish to praise and rejoice. Dorsey’s Precious Lord meets all these criteria for success and then some. It was created when Dorsey’s wife, Nettie Harper, died in childbirth in 1932, along with their infant son; Dorsey was inconsolable and wrote the song in his grief. It was first recorded by the Heavenly Gospel Singers in 1937 and was Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s favorite song. This arrangement by Arnold Sevier has traveled the world with countless choirs.
NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER CONT.

Trad. Polish melody and lyrics, arr. Jacek Sykulski: Góralu, czy ci nie żal
Chicago's Polish population is one of the world’s largest and most influential. As with the Irish potato famine, the starvation in the Polish highlands drove many people to other countries, and that situation is captured in these very lyrics. “Góralu, czy ci nie żal” is often sung at large gatherings, banquets, and similar communal occasions. This beautiful setting is by the prominent Polish choral conductor and arranger Jacek Sykulski, director of the Poznań Boys’ Choir and a recipient of many local and national honors.

Góralu, wracaj do hal!
Highlander, go back to the halls!
Góralu, czy ci nie żal
Highlander, do not you regret it
Odchodzić od stron ojczystych,
Move away from native locales,
Świerkowych lasów i hal
Spruce forests and halls
I tych potoków srebrzystych?
And those silvery streams?
Góralu, czy ci nie żal,
Highlander, are you sorry?
Góralu, wracaj do hal!
Highlander, go back to the halls!

A góral na góry spoziera
And the mountaineer looks at the mountains
I lzy rękawem ociera,
And wipes tears with the sleeve,
Bo góral na góry spoziera
Because mountains have to be abandoned,
I łzy rękawem ociera,
For bread, sir, for bread.
Dla chleba, panie, dla chleba.
Góralu, czy ci nie żal …
Highlander, are you sorry? …
A góral jak dziecko płacze:
A highlander cries like a child:
Może już ich nie zobaczę;
Maybe I will not see them again;
I starych porzucić trzeba,
And the old ones must be abandoned,
Dla chleba, panie, dla chleba.
For bread, sir, for bread.
Góralu, czy ci nie żal …
Highlander, are you sorry? …
—Translation by Jonathan Miller
—Translation by Jonathan Miller
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Robert Johnson, arr. Patrick Sinozich: Sweet Home Chicago
Robert Johnson is known by blues aficionados as one of the best in the business. He recorded this song in November 1936 in San Antonio. His hit shares features many lyrics with “Kokomo Blues” and has the same tune as “Honey Dripper Blues.” In addition to the now-legendary recording by the Blues Brothers, bluesmen B. B. King and Buddy Guy performed it in the East Room of the White House in 2012, with President Barack Obama singing along for the first verse.

Albert von Tilzer, arr. Anne Heider: Take Me Out to the Ball Game
Have you ever heard all the lyrics to this song? As with so many tunes from the early 20th century, this one usually has the first part cut off. In this case, when you do that, you miss the best part of the story! Katie Casey was a die-hard baseball fan… she spent every last dime (or “soul,” an old-fashioned word for a nickel) on her favorite pastime. Anne Heider has created a fun and fetching arrangement here, and since she has sung alto for so many years it’s not surprising that the altos (and even the basses) get the melody now and then. We even get to follow the umpire’s count at the end.
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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 eighth annual Youth Choral Festival will be held on Saturday, Dec. 1 at Northeastern Illinois University located in Chicago.

¡Cantaré! Chicago
Now in its third year, ¡Cantaré! Chicago is an educational program that combines Mexican heritage with choral singing. Julio Morales, esteemed Mexican composer, will work throughout the school year with two high schools and two elementary schools in Chicago. Morales will compose new music for each school, and the four schools, along with our High School Apprentice ensemble and our Chicago a cappella singers will come together for a final performance on Friday, May 3, 2019.

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

High School Apprenticeship Program
Our High School Apprenticeship 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, nine talented and motivated students are serving as Chicago a cappella High School Apprentices in 2018-19, 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
ABOUT CHICAGO A CAPPELLA

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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Cari Plachy ..................................................................... Chicago, Chicago; Youth Choral Festival;
..................................................................................................................... Holidays; Dynamic Duos; Cantaré; Gala
Sarah Ponder ................................................................ Holidays; Dynamic Duos; Cantaré; Gala
Emily Price ......................................................................... Entire Season

BIOGRAPHIES

Geoffrey Baer is a seven-time Emmy-winning Public Television writer, producer and program host. He has been a fixture on Chicago’s PBS station WTTW for 29 years. His work includes more than 20 feature-length “television tours” of the city and suburbs, a culinary special called The Foods of Chicago that was nominated for a coveted James Beard Award, and specials including Chicago Time Machine and the quiz show Where in Chicago. He also appears weekly on WTTW’s flagship nightly news program Chicago Tonight, answering viewers’ questions about Chicago architecture and history in a segment called Ask Geoffrey. Nationally he hosts the PBS primetime series 10 that Changed America about game changing buildings, homes, parks, town, monuments and engineering wonders across the country. He traveled to Cuba just days after the death of Fidel Castro to host the PBS primetime special Weekend in Havana. His other national public television specials include documentaries about acclaimed architects Robert A. M. Stern and Michael Graves and Saved from the Wrecking Ball, a documentary about the rescue of Mies van der Rohe’s Farnsworth House.
He has been a docent for the Chicago Architecture Foundation since 1987, and has served on the boards of the Art Institute of Chicago’s Architecture and Design Society and Chicago’s acclaimed Lookingglass Theatre Company.

In addition to his Emmy awards, Geoffrey has been honored by the Society of Architectural Historians, the American Society of Landscape Architects, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Chicago Headline Club. He has a master’s degree in theatre from Northwestern University and a BS in radio-TV-film from Miami University in Ohio.

Soprano Megan Bell works regularly with the Chicago Symphony Chorus, Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, Chicago a cappella, and St Charles Singers. 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 St Charles, with her husband and two young children. She is the Leader of Fox Valley Attachment Parenting, and an active member of Traditional Nutrition, and GIFT Homeschool Coop.

Soprano Tracie Davis is thrilled to be joining Chicago a cappella for the second consecutive season. Originally from Pflugerville, Texas, she has made an impression on audiences, teachers, and colleagues alike with her rich, robust voice and heartfelt emotional performances. She received her B.M. in Vocal Performance at Louisiana State University and her M.M. in Voice Performance at Roosevelt University’s Chicago College of Performing Arts (CCPA). While at CCPA, Davis performed in the Midwest premiere of The Beautiful Bridegroom by Dan Shore, La Bella Dormente nel Bosco by Ottorino Respighi, and Il Viaggio a Reims by Gioachino Rossini. Since graduating, Davis has enjoyed performances with The William Ferris Chorale, the Grant Park Chorus, and Spirito! Singers, among others. In addition to CAC, she keeps busy as a freelance singer, spending time with loved ones, traveling, and enjoying the beautiful city of Chicago.
Michael Hawes is a Bass-Baritone singer and Trumpet player. He received his Bachelor's degree in vocal and trumpet performance, and later a Master's in trumpet performance, from Northwestern University. He is trumpet player in residence at St. Michael's Church, and is a member of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, the Music of the Baroque Chorus, the Grant Park Symphony Chorus, and sings frequently with Chicago's Schola Antiqua, the Chicago Opera Theater chorus, Bella Voce, and is very much looking forward to joining Chicago a cappella this season for several programs. He recently performed with the Grammy Award-winning choir The Crossing, in Philadelphia, as well as the Clarion Choir of New York in their collaboration with pop star Madonna. As a trumpet player he has performed with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, the Music of the Baroque Orchestra in Chicago, and the National Symphony of Taiwan. In his free time, you can find him chasing frisbees into Lake Michigan.

Garrett Johannsen is proud to be singing in his eighth season with Chicago a cappella! He is originally from Schiller Park, Illinois and now resides in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood. His career performance highlights include multiple international tours with Chamber Opera Chicago performing Jane Austen's Persuasion, Carl Orff’s Carmina Burana at Carnegie Hall with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and being a featured singer in a Nederlander Centennial medley performance for one of Broadway in Chicago's Summer Concerts at Jay Pritzker Pavilion. He has performed with the Lyric Opera, Chicago Symphony and Grant Park Choruses as well as chamber choirs Bella Voce and The William Ferris Chorale. Most recently, he was featured in Chicago Cabaret Professional’s 20th Anniversary Cabaret at the Biograph Theater. Garrett received his training at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University. You can follow Garrett at www.garrettjohannsen.com.

From the stages of Chicago's Pritzker Pavilion and Chicago Shakespeare Theater to Frank Lloyd Wright's concert hall at Taliesin and Muddy River Opera Company in Southern Illinois, soprano Kathryn Kamp has created a career spanning oratorio, opera, operetta and music theater. Her performance of John Corigliano's Fern Hill with the Grant Park Music Festival was described both “meltingly sung” and “beautifully sung.” Her Despina (Così fan Tutte) was “… a display of immense charm and humor…she bounced about the stage with a lightness and relish that seemed the incarnation of mischievous delight…a fine soprano voice.” Other credits include: Kathie (The Student Prince), many Gilbert and Sullivan ingenues, and Sondheim's Anne Egerman (Muddy River Opera) and Mrs. Segstrom (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). Concert performances include a staged version of Bach's Coffee Cantata, Mabel and Yum-Yum (Pirates of Penzance and Mikado) at the Grant Park Music Festival, and more Messiahs than she can count. However, no experience tops that of being a member of Chicago a cappella.

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, Weihnachts-Oratorium, St. Matthew Passion, Cantatas 76, 135, 177 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 also sang concert versions of the Handel operas Semele and Ariodante. 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.

Soprano Cari Plachy is a highly respected singer in Chicago. She has been seen throughout the Midwest with Opera for the Young, DuPage Opera Theater, Light Opera Works, and Bowen Park Opera. Favorite roles include Mabel (Pirates of Penzance), Yum-Yum (The Mikado), Gretel (Hansel and Gretel), and Rosina (The Barber of Seville). She is proud to be kicking off her 12th season with Chicago a cappella and 15th season with the Chicago Symphony Chorus. She was a featured soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Beyond the Score Concert Things Our Fathers Loved and as Ancilla in Bach's St. John Passion. The Chicago Sun-Times described her solo in Bruckner's Psalm 150 with the CSO as "sparkling." Cari received her Bachelor's degree in music education from DePaul University. Since then, she has been working with the Negaunee Music Institute at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, bringing music to children all over Chicago. In addition to her work in Chicago, Cari runs a home studio teaching Musikgarten classes to babies, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Mezzo-soprano Emily Price is a graduate of Northwestern University and enjoys performing in opera, choral and musical theater productions. In addition to Chicago a cappella, she sings with the Lyric Opera, Grant Park Music Festival Chorus and Chicago Symphony Chorus. Internationally, she has performed in over 35 countries as a soloist with the Voices of Bahá 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 Bahá at Carnegie Hall, RESPECT! The Original Cast Album, and a solo album entitled Songs of the Nightingale with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra.

Jonathan Miller has been the leader of Chicago a cappella's artistic team since its inception in 1993. He is the group's original low bass and music director. His work with CAC has been recognized with the Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal from Chorus America. A passionate communicator about the power of choral music, Jonathan is also Artistic Director & CEO of Encore Illinois, which provides choral-music education and performance opportunities to older adults age 55 and up. He directs five daytime Encore Chorales and manages the Encore organization, which
currently serves more than 300 singers in 7 non-auditioned choirs throughout the city and suburbs. He and his wife Sandy also lead the Good Memories Chorale, a new Encore program for people with early-stage memory loss and their care partners, singing together.

Jonathan grew up in Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood and experienced Rev. Christopher Moore’s unusually potent programming magic during ten years with the Chicago Children’s Choir. After studying mathematics at the University of Chicago, Jonathan earned his doctorate in historical musicology at UNC-Chapel Hill. He started composing in 1998; his publishers include Hinshaw, Walton, and Hal Leonard, His choral works have been sung around the world and at major American venues including St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, the Lincoln Memorial, and the Pentagon. His ongoing series of Wacky Christmas Carols continues to mix words and tunes in new combinations. His “Shehecheyanu” was featured at the 2018 meeting of the American Conference of Cantors. A leader in Jewish choral music, Jonathan manages the Max Janowski catalogue, serves as high-holiday cantor at Congregation Rodfei Zedek in Hyde Park, and has lectured at the North American Jewish Choral Festival. In 2017 he did original research in Poland for Chicago a cappella’s upcoming Polish Splendor program and served as faculty for the China (Qandongnan) International Folk Song Choral Festival and IFMC World Voices Conference in Kaili, China. A former board member of Chorus America, Jonathan is an enthusiastic auctioneer for charity events. He enjoys travel, cooking, and learning new languages and is crazy about his wife, family, friends, and dogs.

Principal Music Director 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 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 to serving as Chicago a cappella’s Principal Music Director, he is Associate Professor at the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music.

Performances with Chicago a cappella 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 also performed for the American Choral Directors’ Association, Chorus America, and the National Association for Music Education.

Trotter earned the Doctorate in Conducting from the University of Michigan (the top-ranked conducting program in North America) and undertook advanced studies with Eric Ericson, Helmuth Rilling, Andrew Parrott, and Jon Washburn. His conducting students have taken significant positions, gained entrance to top-ranked graduate programs, and earned national recognition at the ACDA Student Conducting Competition. Trotter is 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. 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
A founding ensemble member of Chicago a cappella, Matthew Greenberg has led the organization as Executive Director since 1995. 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 successful gala fundraisers, the establishment of two cash reserves, a multi-year pledge program, and marketing campaigns which have increased the ensemble’s subscription base and overall audiences. 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. As a professional singer, Matt’s credits include musical theater, solo, and choral work, notably with the Chicago Symphony Chorus and Grant Park Chorus, both of which he performed with for over 20 years.

Here’s where other ensemble members are performing this fall:

Joe Labozetta is having a very busy fall, including his wedding in early September! He performed with the King Solomon’s Singers and the The Rookery in late September and sings with Schola Antiqua on Oct. 20 and 21. He then joins the CSO Chorus for their performances of the Verdi Requiem (Nov. 8-10) before returning to Chicago a cappella for the upcoming “Holidays a cappella: Silver Bells” concerts in December.

Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee: will be writing his dissertation and teaching world music at the University of Chicago. He will be joining fellow CAC singer Bethany Clearfield as an ensemble member for the John Elmquist Project in October, as well as combining forces with CAC bass buddy Joe Labozetta for Schola Antiqua’s quincentennial concert of music by Dutch composer Pierre de la Rue. He’s looking forward to jumping onboard CAC’s 25th anniversary season soon!

Chelsea Lyons: After a busy summer singing with the Grant Park Chorus and the Green Lake Music Festival, Chelsea spent two weeks in Montana with Grammy-winning ensemble The Crossing during their annual residency in Big Sky. In September, she traveled with them for performances at FringeArts in Philadelphia, the Park Avenue Armory in NYC, and Montclair State University in New Jersey. She is looking forward to joining Chicago a cappella for Polish Splendor in 2019!

Sarah Ponder: This fall, Sarah is singing in performances of Idomeneo and La Bohème with Lyric Opera of Chicago. She is also being featured in several oratorio performances in the region. She can’t wait to be back in rehearsals with her CAC colleagues for Holidays a cappella: Silver Bells!
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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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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