Polish Splendor: Songs and Traditions from the Crossroads of Europe

Saturday, February 9, 2019, 8:00 pm  
Nichols Concert Hall  
1490 Chicago Ave., Evanston

Sunday, February 10, 2019, 4:00 pm  
Pilgrim Congregational Church  
460 Lake St., Oak Park

Saturday, February 16, 2019, 8:00 pm  
Wentz Concert Hall  
171 East Chicago Ave., Naperville  
on the campus of North Central College

Saturday, February 17, 2019, 4:00 pm  
Copernicus Center  
5216 W. Lawrence Ave., Chicago

Chicago a cappella

Megan Bell, Soprano  
Katelyn Lee, Soprano  
Kristin Lelm, Soprano  
Chelsea Lyons, Mezzo-soprano  
Emily Price, Mezzo-soprano

Garrett Johannsen, Tenor  
Trevor Mitchell, Tenor  
Ryan Cox, Bass  
Michael Hawes, Bass  
Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee, Bass

Founder and Artistic Director  
Jonathan Miller

Principal Music Director  
John William Trotter

Diction Coaching: Katarzyna Dorula  
Historical Consultant: Brian Zakem

This program is generously supported by a grant from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.  
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.
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?

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

¡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. This program is fully accessible. For any accessibility requests, please contact Chicago a cappella at (773)281-7820.

Friday, May 3, 7:00 pm
Northeastern Illinois University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago
Free Event

Gala Concert: Hollywood a cappella
Chicago a cappella pays homage to award-winning Hollywood music from the Golden Age and beyond. Our gala concert features dinner, a silent auction and raffle, and a heartfelt tribute to our honorees.

This year’s Tribute Award goes to Christopher Bell, Chorus Director at the Grant Park Music Festival. Chicago a cappella’s Friend of the Year is Ann Cole.

Friday, May 17, 2019
Venue West
221 North Paulina St., Chicago
Tickets and early bidding available at one.bidpal.net/hollywoodacappella
Gaude Mater Polonia ......................................................... Wincenty z Kielczy; Teofil Klonowski
Gregorian hymn melody

10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes ......................................................... Witold Lutosławski
1. Pod Krakowem czarna rola
2. Nie bede lez ronici

Czerwone jabłusko .............................................................................. arr. Jacek Sykulski

10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes ......................................................... Lutosławski
3. Zachodzie słońce
4. A w Warszawie

Stabat Mater ................................................................. Marek Jasiński

Prayer to Theresa ............................................................... Wojciech Kilar

10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes ......................................................... Lutosławski
5. Oj, i w polu jezioro
6. Jam kalinkę łamała

Scherzo ......................................................................................... Marek Jasiński

Warszawo, moja Warszawo (tango) ............................................................. Andrzej Wlast (lyrics)
and Zygmunt Karasiński/Szymon Kataszek (music)
arr. J. Miller

INTERMISSION

Lacrimosa (after Chopin’s Etude in Eb minor, Op. 10, No. 6) ......................... Chopin
arr. Franck Krawczyk

10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes ......................................................... Lutosławski
7. Gdzie to jedziesz Jasiu?
8. A na onej górze

Trzy Baby (3 peasant Women) ................................................................. Juliusz Łuciuk

The Last Letter of St. Maximilian to his Mother ........................................... Paweł Łukaszewski

10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes ......................................................... Lutosławski
9. Już to miaś siódmym roczek
10. Małgorzatka

Prayer for the Homeland ..................................................................... Paweł Łukaszewski

*Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the front of house staff. 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.*
I’ve often been asked this question: “Jonathan, you’re not Polish. Why is your professional ensemble, Chicago a cappella, doing a program of Polish music?” Well, when your metropolitan area has one of the world’s most significant and influential Polish populations, it’s a good idea to get to know the cultural riches in your backyard. Our organization decided to send me to Poland in May 2017 to conduct original research. The concert you’re hearing today is the first major fruit from that journey. We even have an a cappella choral version of a piano etude by Chopin on this concert!

For most of its history, Poland has been an unusually eclectic place, with a cultural heritage built on the mixing of peoples. We begin our program with the medieval hymn “Gaude Mater Polonia,” the national anthem of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—an unusually tolerant period of ethnic intermixing between about 1550 and 1792. By contrast, present-day Poland is more culturally and ethnically homogenous than ever; nevertheless, dozens of different influences continue to have ripple effects in the culture. Even within Polish folk culture, there are many threads and traditions, documented in the classic compendium of folk songs collected by the ethnographer Oskar Kolberg.

What does this mean for choral music?

* * * * * *

The main assumption I took on my research trip to Warsaw and Kraków was quickly overturned. I assumed that I’d be easily able to find choral arrangements of “Polish folk tunes,” the Polish choral equivalents of “Shenandoah,” “Home on the Range,” and “Red River Valley.” But no! My first meeting was with Paweł Łukaszewski, the leading composer in Poland today and a musician of international stature—one of the “titans” of Polish music. Paweł spent over an hour with me in Warsaw, kindly debunking my myths and giving me a crash course in recent Polish choral-music history.

Under Communism, Paweł explained, the government attempted to dictate what “official” folk music was. In response, Polish composers resisted the regime by writing motets in Latin. Why? The Roman Catholic Church had been granted in 1956 an unusual amount of autonomy for a Communist country, on the condition that the clergy avoid politics. This gave the country’s choral composers a way to develop their skills while ignoring folk material that smacked of partisanship. Latin is therefore the dominant language in Polish choral composition over the last many decades. This is why you’ll find a Latin prayer to St. Theresa on this program, as well as Marek Jaciński’s superb, haunting “Stabat Mater.”

I did find a few gems in the Polish language while I was in Kraków, including “Trzy Baby,” as well as the Lutosławski song cycle on soldier themes, a remarkable achievement; and you’ll hear Sykulski’s rollicking arrangement of the famous folk melody “Czerwone jabłuszko,” a new favorite tune of mine.

I also met Eleanor Schapiro, an American scholar who was doing her doctoral field work while I was there. She taught me a great deal about Jewish life and music in Poland since World War II. She told me that the two forms of Jewish-influenced music that have survived over the past 80 years are kabaret and klezmer, precisely because they were adopted by the wider culture. Kabaret is the tradition of torch songs, old standards, and radio hits, many of which were written by Jewish songwriters. You’ll hear a Polish tango from the kabaret era to close the first half, the delightful “Warszawo, moja Warszawo,” a love song to the capital city.
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR CONT.

This program has been a labor of love and discovery. I am deeply grateful to my friend and colleague Brian Zakem for encouraging the project and for his insistence to always keep the wider picture of tolerance and peacemaking in mind. We are also grateful to Kasia Dorula for her masterful diction coaching and collaborative spirit. Thanks also to the Chicago a cappella board for supporting the research that led to this program, to Matt Greenberg for his cheerful support of the idea, and to John Trotter for expert musical direction.

Thank you, most of all, for being here. Enjoy the show.

—Jonathan Miller

HISTORICAL NOTES BY BRIAN ZAKEM

The idea that seeded this concert began for me nearly 60 years ago. In spring 1960, an elder relative, Fred Zakem, outlined for a family holiday gathering the process by which (so he thought) an ancestor selected our family’s surname, Zera Kodesh (abbreviated, according to Hebrew custom of taking the initial letters, as Za’k) from Isaiah 6:13. The family came from a small town, Ruhzany, first settled in 1552. Now part of Belarus, it was then part of what is commonly known as the multi-ethnic Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1795).

In the 1650s, the Commonwealth was the second-largest country geographically in Europe, with a population approaching 11 million. It was also one of the most diverse and tolerant nations on our planet. The multi-ethnic history of the Commonwealth includes not only the current majority Roman Catholic population but also Lithuanian, Swedish, Jewish, the Lipka Tatar Muslims, Roma, German, Russian, French, and many more peoples.

Despite the Commonwealth’s previous environment of religious tolerance, between Passover 1657 and Yom Kippur 1659 the Jewish community in Ruzhany was brutally attacked, with the events chronicled in a Yizkor (remembrance) book. I was mesmerized by this history, and I have pursued this story for decades as a lay historian. I am fortunate to have a well-documented family history, complemented by a richly factual broader scholarship of this important European crossroads.

Perhaps, just as I continue to discover more about the lives of my ancestors’ and their diverse neighbors within the relevant historical context, you will be inspired to delve into your own family’s history and uncover meaningful connections to your past. We hope that today’s concert, through its a cappella musical selections, will stimulate your interest in this remarkable cultural and religious crossroads. Our selections are rooted in music primarily from Europe—mostly Eastern and some Central—starting with the medieval hymn “Gaude Mater Polonia,” which was the Commonwealth’s national anthem of sorts. Some of the more contemporary selections spring from political events. As Jonathan notes, the history of Polish choral music in the 20th century includes composers’ responses to the post-WWII regime in the Soviet-bloc Republic of Poland, a subtle form of resistance to a party line that attempted to dictate what “official” Polish folk music would be.

Of course, not just in music but in the wider culture, an emerging group of secular and religious leaders, still including Lech Walesa and Adam Michnik, have persisted in championing the cause of building a robust democracy and safe guarding religious freedom. These two pioneers of the Solidarity movement are still fighting “the good fight” toward sustaining and strengthening the democratic institutions that were created in Poland.
following the Soviet Union’s collapse. We now hope that the societal conflicts that have come to the surface of Poland’s national life, as well as many of their neighboring nations, will be addressed through civil dialogue, toward a future that promotes the continued building and sustaining a more vibrant, freedom-loving democracy.

For centuries, various peoples have taken turns invading and “carving up,” so to speak, lands that made up the Commonwealth. While such political and cultural changes sometimes led to societal enrichment, too often they tragically led to social instability, friction and an increase of “acted out” prejudices. With our Polish Splendor music crossing several important roads within Europe, we aim not only to keep open the door to beautiful culture but also reinforce the healthy paths that lead to truth and reconciliation. At their best, history and culture can help point us toward incorporating the virtue of telling the truth and, where needed, facilitating peacemaking to take the place of strife, fear, and hate-inspired violence. If you would like to learn more about such ongoing efforts in reconciliation both here and abroad, send your contact information to me at bzakem@comcast.net.

On a personal note, it has been extraordinarily gratifying and meaningful to closely work with Jonathan over the last few years. Not only has our friendship grown while we “unearthed” more and more about some of our ancestor’s roots, but this work together also has led to this concert that we share with you now. We hope that it adds an important chapter of rich heritage to Chicago and beyond!

—Brian Zakem

To learn more specifically about Ruzhany’s history, you will be well served by checking out www.JewishGen.org, then click in order: Yizkor Books, Belarus, R, and Ruhzany Translated, to access the first English edition, coedited by Edie Taylor and Brian Zakem and published in 2012).

NOTES ON THE MUSIC BY JONATHAN MILLER

Trad. Gregorian chant melody, arr. Teofil Klonowski: Gaude Mater Polonia
This was the national anthem of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The tune is closely related to the Gregorian hymn O salutaris hostia. The text was composed by Vincent of Kielce to commemorate the canonization in 1254 of Saint Stanisław. The song became associated with royalty and coronations in the centuries that followed, along with victories in battle. It is also sung at university inaugurations and major holidays in Poland.

The story of Saint Stanisław’s miracle says that, after his body was cut up into pieces, it miraculously put itself back together again. This of course is an allegory or analogy to the way Poland and the Commonwealth were broken up and reconstituted politically.

Gaude Mater Polonia!  
Prole foecunda nobili. 
Summi Regis magnolia laude frequenta vigili. 
Amen 
—Wincentry z Kielczy

Rejoice, Mother Poland!  
Rich with noble offspring. 
The great works of the highest praise with frequent vigil. 
Amen 
—trans. Jonathan Miller

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Witold Lutosławski, arr. Pawel Łukaszewski: 10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes (U.S. Premiere)
A major force in classical music inside and outside Poland, Witold Lutosławski was a prolific creator and conductor of orchestral and chamber music. When he died in 1994 at the age of 81, the New York Times summed up his place in history as follows:
NOTES ON THE MUSIC cont.

Mr. Lutoslawski prized beauty in music and made a point of saying so even when beauty in new music was out of fashion. His works are distinguished by long-lined melodies, an ingenious use of orchestral structure and harmonies that vary from comfortable lushness to pungent acidity. Yet it would be wrong to think of them as neo-Romantic. In creating what he called his “sound language,” Mr. Lutoslawski drew freely on avant-garde techniques, spicing his works with a light atonality and limited improvisation.

In other words, although he availed himself of the various emerging techniques that came in and out of fashion in the mid-to-late twentieth century (such as 12-tone and aleatoric writing), Lutosławski was not a trend-follower and insisted on his own integrity and path.

The strength of character that the composer displayed in his musical language was matched by his unwillingness to kowtow politically. Lutosławski wrote this cycle originally for men’s chorus in 1951, a time when Stalinist politics and financial difficulties prompted the composer to accept a commission from the Home of the Polish Armed Forces. Despite the obvious pressures, the composer managed never to write a work that glorified Stalin. Lutosławski made a point to seek out melodies that had been collected by the great ethnographer Oskar Kolberg, writing later in his life that “All of them have very innocent lyrics, without any politics whatsoever.”

Pawel Łukaszewski tells us that this cycle of ten songs are among the only a cappella pieces that Lutosławski ever wrote. The famous Polish choral conductor Jan Łukaszewski (no relation) of the Polish Chamber Choir found out about the cycle from the Swedish conductor Eric Ericson and was very happy to learn that Paweł Łukaszewski undertook a mixed-voice version of the cycle, saying that the reworking “makes it possible to introduce new sounds into the interpretations of [these] works.”

We made the decision to scatter the Polish Soldier Songs throughout our concert today, rather than presenting them in a single set. We will sing them two at a time, therefore, in five pairs at various points in the program.

1. Pod Krakowem czarna rola—this song is sometimes performed as a polka.

Pod Krakowem

Pod krakowem czarna rola, Under the black soil of Cracow
Ja jej orać nie będę, I will not plough the land
Powiada mi najmilęjsza moja, My sweetest woman is telling me
Że ja do Wojska pójdę. That I’ll go to the army.

Ja do Wojska z Wojska do dom, From the army to my house
A tyś się nie wydała, Why do you not want to get married?
Powiedzże mi najmilejsia moja, Tell me my dear why,
Na kogoś się czekała. Who did you wait for?

Czekalam ja na cię Jasiu, I waited for you John,
Czekalam ja na ciebie, I waited for you,
Bom se w tobie serce utopila, Because I put my heart in you,
Nie mogę być bez ciebie. I cannot be without you.

Te Chusteczkę coś mi dała, This handkerchief that you gave me,
Ja jej nosić nie będę, I will not wear,
Rzucę ja ją na pośrodek morza, I will throw it in the middle of the sea,
A sam do Wojska pójdę. And I will go to the army.

—Trad. Folk lyric —trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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2. Nie będę łez ronić—a tender song about a woman who steadfastly loves her man, even though she knows he may not return to her alive.

Nie będę łez ronić
I Will Not Cry

Nie bede łez ronić,  
My Stanley wants to leave me,  
Choc mnie Stach ma rzucić,  
He will defend our country,  
Poidzie kraju bronic,  
Why should I grieve?  
Czegoz sie mamy smucic.

Niech sie we mnie kocha,  
Let him love me,  
Ze wsi mlydzie cala,  
Everyone in the village knows,  
On wie zem nie plocha,  
He knows I do not love another,  
Ze mu bemy stale.

Mam ja nie tykane
I will be faithful to him,
Dwa krzaczki rzone,  
From two rose bushes,  
Jak wrosci mlyzieniec,  
When he comes back I will make him a garland,  
Uwiju mu wieniec.

Bo kto krew ochoczy,  
He is willing to shed his blood,  
Oczynzne broczy,  
To save our homeland from dying.  
Takien mu kochanka  
He is such a lover,  
Nie zaluje wieniaka.

—Trad. Folk lyric

Arr. Jacek Sykulski: Czerwone jabluszko

The song Czerwone jabluszko is based on a traditional kujawiak dance tune, which is a genre of tunes in 3/4 time from the Kujawy region. The kujawiak usually has a lyrical melody, not too fast, which is danced with knees slightly bent.

The tune feels very old and probably is. The text is so well suited to the tune that it also feels old, but this is where we get a surprise. The text dates only from the time of World War II. The tune was being played by street musicians in Warsaw during the Nazi occupation, and it was used as a song of warning to alert people in the underground to the presence of spies, collaborators, and “ladies of light morals” who would deal sympathetically with the Germans.

The prolific composer and arranger Jacek Sykulski is the director of the Poznan Boys’ Choir, a well-known ensemble that tours internationally and has a strong reputation for musical excellence. Sykulski has arranged everything from folk songs to pop tunes, and Chicago a cappella has done several of his works over the past 15 years or so. He has a strong and eclectic stamp to his music, and once he gets onto a musical idea, he pursues it with drive and intensity; one might think of Finland’s Jaakko Mäntyjärvi for a contemporary composer of similar individuality.

The combination of Sykulski’s intensity and the lyrical folk tune give a somewhat dark cast to the experience of the song. The tune migrates among various voice parts; the key changes from time to time; and the frenzied buildup at the end makes one feel that one is whirling in an intense kujawiak rhythm.

Czerwone jabluszko przekrojone na krzyz,  
Red apple cut into the shape of a cross  
Czemu Ty, dziewczyno krzwo na mnie patrzysz?  
Why do you look at me with a wry face, girl?

Geszi za wodą, kaczki za wodą,  
Goose on the water, duck on the water,  
Uciekaj dziewczyno, bo cię poboda,  
Run away, girl, because they will attack you,  
Ja ci buzi dam, ty mi buzi dasz  
I gave you a kiss, you gave me a kiss.  
Ja cię nie wydam, ty mnie nie wydasz.

I don’t deceive you, you don’t deceive me.

Czerwone jabluszko po ziemi się toczy.  
Red apple is rolling on the ground.

Tego chłopca kocham, co ma czarne oczy.  
Boy, I love your black eyes.
NOTES ON THE MUSIC cont.

Mazurek, mazureczek, oberek, obereczek, kujawiak, kujawiaczek,
Choć że Maryś, choć że, chodź, Cchodź!

Żebym ja wiedziała, żeś ty chłopak stały
To by moje oczka za tobą patrzyły.

Gęsi za wodą, kaczy za wodą,
Uciekaj dziewczyno, bo Cie poboda (2x),

Mazurek, mazureczek, oberek, obereczek, kujawiak, kujawiaczek,
Choć że Maryś, choć że, chodź, Cchodź!

—Trad. Folk lyric

Reference to traditional song and dance

Come over Mary’s, come over come!

If I knew you were a steady boyfriend,
Then you would be worth looking at.

Goose on the water, duck on the water,
Run away girl, because they will attack you.

Come over Mary’s, come over.
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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Witold Lutosławski, arr. Pawel Łukaszewski: 10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes (U.S. Premiere)
This is the second set of two songs from Lutosławski’s cycle.

3. Zachodzi słoneczko—a lyrical song about the sun setting

Zachodzi słoneczko
Zachodzi słoneczko ku lasowi,
Niedajże gębusi wojaczkowi.
Jak mu nie dać, kiem mu dała.
Będziesz wojaczka pamiętala.

Zachodzi słoneczko ku lasowi,
Niedajże gębusi wojaczkowi.
Jakże nie dać, kiej mnie prosi,
Ściska mnie i podarunki znosi.
—Trad. Folk lyric

The Sun is Setting
The sun sets in the forest,
I give the soldier boy a kiss.
He says not to give him a kiss.
But I give him a kiss I will never forget.

How can I not give him a kiss,
He embraces me and gives me many gifts.
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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4. A w Warszawie—a song about a soldier who is being outfitted with his first uniform

A w Warszawie
A w Warszawie w pierwszym domie,
Szyją mundur właśnie dla mnie,
A kapotę na piątek,
Na niedzielę, na Świątek.

Jak mnie w mundur ubierali,
to się wszyscy dziwo wali,
Matko miła, ojcze mój,
Jaki piękny mundur mój.

Jak będziemy maszerować,
każą nam koniki kować
podkówkami z mosiądzu,
Hej, dziewczyno siadaj tu.

A siadajże, jak masz siadać,
Bo ja nie mam cza su ga dać;
Wcinszę czapkę na ucho,
Bywaj zdrowa dziewucho.
—Trad. Folk lyric

And in Warsaw
And in Warsaw in the first house
They are sewing a uniform just for me,
A coat for Friday,
Sunday, and the holidays.

When they dressed me in the uniform,
Everyone was surprised,
My mother, my father,
What a beautiful uniform of mine.

We will march,
We will go with horses that have horseshoes
That are made of brass
Hey girl, sit down here.

Sit down if you want to sit down,
I have no time to talk, I need to go girl,
I will put on my hat,
Stay well.
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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Marek Jaciński: *Stabat Mater (U.S. Premiere)*

This major work is a powerful statement by a composer who wrote choral and instrumental music as well as choral-orchestral works. Jaciński played piano from the age of six and studied in Szczecin. He was a faculty member at schools in Szczecin and Poznan and for over a decade taught at the Music Academy in Bydgoszcz. He continued to produce new works while teaching composition, counterpoint, and harmony; among his famous works are his Psalm 100 (in English) for mixed choir, which, like the *Stabat Mater*, was championed and recorded by the Polish Radio Choir under the direction of Szymon Wyrzykowski. Marek Jaciński died suddenly in 2010 while teaching composition in Romania. His students put together a Requiem concert for him in his memory.

The “Stabat Mater” prayer is a pillar of the medieval Latin liturgy. It focuses on the grief of the Virgin Mary as she watches her son, Jesus, dying on the cross. The text runs to 20 stanzas, of which this composer only sets the first two and the last three. Jaciński’s setting is in what we might call the late 20th-century international style, with chords that hang in the air with intensity and ringing clarity—neither as dissonant as Whitacre or as contrapuntally conceived as Lauridsen, but occupying a satisfying middle place. There is very little “Polish-sounding” about this style, but it is probably the most representative style of post-WWII Polish choral composition thus far in the program. (See the introductory notes for more historical background.)

Stabat Mater dolorosa
Juxta crucem lacrimosa
dum pendebat Filius.

Cujus animam gementem,
contristatam et dolentem
pertravisit gladius.

Stabat Mater dolorosa...

Inflammatus et accensus,
per te, Virgo, sim defensus
in die judicii.

Christe, cum sit hunc exire,
da per Matrem me venire
ad palmam victoriae.

Quando corpus morietur,
fac, ut animae donetur
paradisi gloria. Amen.

—Trad. Folk lyric

Wojciech Kilar: *A Prayer to St. Therese “The Little Flower” (U.S. Premiere)*

A composer mostly of orchestral and film music, Kilar found his biggest fame with the score to the 1993 film *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, directed by Francis Ford Coppola. Other honors include accolades for his scores to *The Promised Land* (1975), *Le Roi et l’Oiseau / The King and the Mockingbird* (1980), and *From A Far Country* (1981) about the life of Pope John Paul II. His studies took off when he moved to Rzeszów in southern Poland in 1944 and met the charismatic and intuitive teacher Kazimierz Mirski. Kilar’s later study included sessions at the avant-garde school in Darmstadt, Germany in 1957 and a year with Nadia Boulanger in Paris in 1959-60; with Henryk Górecki and Krzysztof Penderecki he was sometimes grouped in the “New Polish School.” Later in his life he abandoned avant-garde musical techniques for a simpler language, and he was inspired by the Gorals highlander folk melodies.

“I think, that’s how I see myself, that I’m a joyful-sad man, like that very banal chord used since the impressionists’ times—minor with an added minor seventh,” said Wojciech Kilar in autumn 1996. During the period of 1981-83, when martial law was imposed in Poland, the composer began visiting
the shrine in Jasna Góra, Częstochowa. He grew in religious feeling from this point forward and began composing sacred works. These included a simplifying of his musical language, with much repetition and stark contrasts, which we see in the work on today’s program. A Prayer to St. Therese was written right before the composer’s death in 2013. The priest Jerzy Szymik, who wrote the words to celebrate the 45th anniversary of the University of Silesia in Katowice, recalls seeing Kilar smiling as he leafed through St. Theresia’s Yellow Notebook.

Święta Tereso, Siostrzó, Przyjaciółko,
Pomóż nam piść żółty zeszyt mały.
I tak jak jesteś Jemu wierną córką,
Tak przy nas czujaj: wróc nas Bogu całych.

Tak się podoba Panu twa nadzieja,
Wszystko co proste, czyste i pokorne.
I do Jezusa oczy twę się śmieją,
Niezch nas prowadzi twoje serce hojne.

Święta Tereso, Patronko miłości,
Usiądź za stołem, dobra Siostrzó – z nami.
Spełń swe marzenia: wyrwij nas z ciemności
I mknij ku niebu windą z grzesznikami.

Amen.
—Father Jerzy Szymik, Katowice 2009

Saint Theresa, Sister, Friend,
Help us write in a small yellow notebook
And as you are His loyal daughter,
Keep watch over us. Lead us to God for all.

He likes your hope,
Everything that is simple, clean and humble.
And your eyes are laughing to Jesus,
Let your generous heart guide us.

Saint Theresa, patron of love,
Sit behind the table, dear sister, with us.
Let your dreams come true, rip us out of the dark
And run to heave with an elevator of sinners.

Amen.
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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Witold Lutosławski, arr. Paweł Łukaszewski: 10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes (U.S. Premiere)
This is the third set of two songs from Lutosławski’s cycle.

5. Oj, I w polu jezioro—a mother cries, asking her son who gave him to the army

Oj, i w polu jezioro
In the Field by the Lake
Oj, i w polu jezioro,
Oh, in the field by the lake,
Oh, in the field by the lake,
There is a dark forest,
There is a dark forest,
Will I go to the high mountains,
To see if anyone is coming for us?

A tam stoi cienmy las,
A tam stoi cienmy las;
Will I go to the high mountains,
He is pinning his saber,
On his left side.

Czy nie jedzie kto do nas?
Czy nie jedzie kto do nas?
I will go to the high mountains,
On a white and grey horse,
On his left side.

Jedzie, jedzie Jasieńko,
Johnny is coming to us,
Johnny is coming to us,
Johnny is coming to us,
On a white and grey horse,
On his left side.

Na swoym siwym koniku;
Przypina sobie swoją szabelkę,
He is pinning his saber,
On his left side.

Do lewego do boku.
Do lewego do boku.

Matka w okienku stała,
Mother stood in the window,
Oh she stood and she cried;
Hello son,
What is this,
Who gives you to the army?

Oj stała i płakała;
Witajże synu,
Kto cię do wojska oddał?
Mother stood in the window,
Oh she stood and she cried;
Hello son,
What is this,
Who gives you to the army?

Witajże synu,
Johnny is coming to us,
Johnny is coming to us,
Johnny is coming to us,
On a white and grey horse,
On his left side.

Kto cię do wojska oddał?
Who gives you to the army?

Oddałże mnie gminny wójt,
The community, mother,
The councilman said,
The councilman said,
The councilman said,
The light of day,
Who gives you to the army?

I do tego radny był,
Dawn, Dawn,
The community, mother,
The councilman said,
The councilman said,
The light of day,
Who gives you to the army?

Świtało, świtało,
The community, mother,
The councilman said,
The councilman said,
The light of day,
Who gives you to the army?

I ma dzień bryznęło,
The light of day,
The light of day,
The light of day,
The light of day,
The light of day,
Who gives you to the army?

To mnie do wojska oddał. Hej!
Hej!
Hej!
Hej!
Hej!
Hej!
Who gives you to the army?

—Trad. Folk lyric
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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The Polish dialect of this piece does not transcribe simply to English. Instead, we have included an English summary of the lyrics.

6. Jam Kalinkę Łamała

Jam Kalinkę łamała,
Na żołnierzę wolała,
Jam kalinkę, mój serdeńko, łamała,
Na żołnierzę, mój serdeńko, wolała, wolała.

A weźże ty z sobą mnie,
Ja konika napoję,
A weźże ty, mój serdeńko, weźże mnie,
Ja konika, mój serdeńko, napoję, napoję.

—I Trad. Folk lyric

Marek Jaciński: Scherzo (U.S. Premiere)

It is wonderful when one has the opportunity to experience two very different sides of the same composer. Marek Jaciński is not only the creator of the intense serious, and legato Stabat Mater that we heard earlier; he is also the funny and playful composer of Scherzo, which is itself a clever name (it means “joke” in Italian and is often the title of a third movement of a four-movement sonata or symphony). In this case the joke is on us further still: the composer’s lyrics are taken exclusively from the sorts of comments a performer would see in a musical score to indicate how a phrase should be played. These include things like staccato, marcato, martellato, and much more. We’ll let the music speak for itself:

Musica musica musica
bocca chiusa
legato
Musica musica musica
bocca chiusa
legato
Musica musica musica
amabilmente
delicatamente
martellando, martellato
marcato
sforzato
martellando, martellato
marcato
pizzicato
tenuto, fermata
martellando, martellato
con agitazione
martellando, martellato
marcato
Musica musica musica
martellando, martellato
marcato marcato marcato
Fine fine FINE!
BASTA!

—I Marek Jaciński

Music music music
closed mouth
connected
Music music music
closed mouth
connected
Music music music
nicely
gently
hammering, hammered
marked
strained
hammering, hammered
marked
plucked
held, stopped
hammering, hammered
with agitation
hammering, hammered
marked
Music music music
hammering, hammered
marked marked marked
The end, the end, THE END!
ENOUGH!

—I trans. Jonathan Miller

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NOTES ON THE MUSIC cont.

Andrzej Włast and Zygmunt Karasiński / Szymon Kataszek (music),
arr. J. Miller: Warszawo, moja Warszawo (tango)

The two Jewish musical forms to survive the Holocaust are klezmer (instrumental music for weddings and dances, usually with clarinet and other lively instruments) and kabaret (popular songs from the 1930s, torch songs and tangos and the like). Mikołaj Gliński gives us some more background as he writes for the website Culture.PL:

The story of Polish pre-war [pre-WWII] entertainment music is a soundtrack made up of songs written and composed by authors of Jewish descent. Poets like Julian Tuwim, Marian Hemar, Andrzej Włast, Jerzy Jurandot, Ludwik Starcki, … along with composers like Henryk Wars, Artur Gold, Jerzy Petersburski and Zygmunt Bialostocki, stand behind the vast majority of the pre-war music hit chart titles.

Sounds just like Tin Pan Alley and the American Songbook, doesn’t it? The 1930s were a superbly creative time for Jewish writers on both sides on the Atlantic. The writer continues:

They all belonged to a generation of acculturated Polish Jews, with virtually no ties to traditional Jewish culture and little connection to modern Yiddish culture. To a large extent this group of artists invented popular culture in Poland, and the songs they wrote became classics known today by every Pole.

Many Polish music-lovers are unaware that the songs they love, and which they grew up singing, are by Jewish songwriters; of course, Americans may not be aware that “God Bless America” and even “White Christmas” were written by Jewish people!

Here we have a terrific example of a Polish-Jewish tango, made famous by the heartthrob singer Adam Aston in 1932. Warszawo, moja Warszawo is a love song to the capital city. The lyrics are sweet and clear. Jonathan Miller’s new edition for choir is based on that 1932 recording.

Warszawo, cudna Warszawo
Ty jesteś miastem rodzinnym mem
Warszawo, moja Warszawo.
Poprzez miejski bruk,
Słyszę serca twoego stuk.

Warszawo, piękna Warszawo.
Jestem przy tobie nocą i dniem.
Nie znajdę lepszej, chociaż szukałbym nie wiem,
gdzie
Ach, bo Warszawo, ja kocham cię.
—Andrzej Włast and Zygmunt Karasiński

Warsaw, wonderful Warsaw
You are the city of my family
Warsaw, my Warsaw.
Look on the city road,
I hear you knocking.

Warsaw, beautiful Warsaw.
I’m by your side in the night time and day time.
I can’t find a better city than you, Warsaw, and I look everywhere.
Oh Warsaw, I love you.
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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INTERMISSION

Fryderyk Chopin, arr. Franck Krawczyk: Lacrimosa

This is a choral transcription of a classical work that wasn’t originally intended for choir. Franck Krawczyk, a composer who trained in Paris and Lyon and works internationally, took Chopin’s Etude in Eb minor, Op. 10, No. 6, and transcribed it for a cappella choir for the Accentus ensemble, directed by Laurence Equilbey (a woman conductor and an ensemble of superb accomplishment). Krawczyk captured the pianistic qualities of Chopin’s piece very well; he also gave his transcription new lyrics that were drawn from the “Lacrimosa” movement of the Mozart Requiem. On hearing both works, one can sense some of the similarities in feeling, as both Chopin’s etude and Mozart’s piece are in 6/8 meter and in a minor key. Accentus’s recording of choral transcriptions of non-choral classical works, called simply Transcriptions, made quite a splash upon its release in 2013.

Polish Splendor: Songs & Traditions 13
2019 Gala Raffle

May 17, 2019

Raffle Grand Prize: $1,500 in cash!

Raffle tickets are $20 or three for $50. The winner will be drawn at the Hollywood *a cappella* gala on May 17; winner need not be present to win.

Tickets are available in the lobby or at one.bidpal.net/hollywoodacappella.
NOTES ON THE MUSIC cont.

Lacrimosa dies illa
Qua resurget ex favilla
Judicandus homo reus.
Huic ergo parce, Deus:
Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem. Amen.
—Trad. Latin liturgy

That day will be full of tears
when from the ashes will rise
the guilty man to be judged.
Therefore spare this one, O God:
Sweet Lord Jesus,
Grant them rest. Amen.
—trans. Jonathan Miller
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Witold Lutosławski, arr. Paweł Łukaszewski: 10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes (U.S. Premiere)

7. Gdzie to jedziesz, Jasiu?—a ballad about a girl (Kasia) offering to go after her love (Jasiu) to the eastern front in Ukraine. Lutosławski only sets the first verse, though there are several others.

Gdzie to jedziesz, Jasiu? Where are you going, John?
Gdzie to jedziesz, Jasiu? Where are you going, John?
Na wojenkę, Kasiu, To the war, Kasia,
Na wojenkę, daleczko. To a war far away.

Weźmiesz i mnie z sobą, Take me with you,
Pojadę ja z tobą, I will follow you,
Na wojenkę, daleczko. To a war far away.

—Trad. Folk lyric
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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8. A na onej górze—this is a tune that Oskar Kolberg collected in Mazovia. As with the previous song, the melody is mostly found in octaves within the soprano and tenor parts. The text is about a pretty girl encountering a group of soldiers on a mountain – and the things that the soldiers think about her.

A na onej górze On the Top
A na onej górze, stoją tam żołnierze, On the top, the soldiers are standing.
Konie sobie siodłają. The horses are saddled.
Przysła do nich jedna dziewczyna nadobna, A pretty girl came to them,
O niej, o niej gadają. They are talking about her.

Rzecz to niepodobna, dziewczyno nadobna, It is impossible, pretty girl,
Żebyś miała moją być. I do not believe you want to be mine,
Ja na wojnę jadę, nie wiem czy przyjadę; I do not know if I’ll come back from war.
Tobie wolno za mąż iść. You are free to marry someone.

Jasieńku klejnocie, choćbyś był we złocie, John, if kindness was a jewel, you would be gold.
Ja w fartuszkę welnianym,
Jednak ci ja ciebie do siebie przywabię
Swoim li czkiem rumianym. Hola, hej!

—Trad. Folk lyric
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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Juliusz Łuciuk: Trzy Baby (3 Peasant Women)
This is a superb cycle of three short songs by one of Poland’s leading composers, now 92 years old (born on New Year’s Day, 1927). Like his countryman Wojciech Kilar, Juliusz Łuciuk studied at Darmstadt and with Nadia Boulanger, also taking seminars with Olivier Messiaen. Łuciuk has been focusing solely on composition since he finished his studies. He has written orchestral, chamber, choral, and solo vocal works. Most of his later choral output is of a sacred nature, making this cycle somewhat unusual; the musical expressiveness is so powerful that we wanted to give it a place on this program.

This cycle is original music based on folk texts. The musical language is reminiscent of the Danish composer Vagn Holmboe’s middle-period works such as Solhymne, which Chicago a cappella performed
very early on in its history; Łuciuk’s harmonies create soundscapes without being either strongly tonal or highly dissonant, and yet they have strong character and evoke color and emotion.

Danaż moja, dana, opiłam furmana
Hej!
Danaż moja, dana, opiłam furmana,
Zabrałam se pienążki,
Wyspałam się sama. Hej!
Siwy koń, popielaty ogon,
Powiedz mi, dziewczyno, czy ci się podobom. Hej!
Idzie woda, stań się na skręcie,
Ej, z naszego kochania
Ponoć nic nie będzie.
Hej! Hej!

8. Kasia płucha
Spadnie robok, spadnie mucha
Jasień powie, Kasia płucha.
wpadnie robok, wpadnie mucha.
Wy drużbowie, a wy komuni,
Składajcie się na bieguny,
W cymze będzie kołysała
A jak syna będzie miała.
—Trad. Folk lyric

Dana, my Dana.
Hey!
Dana, my Dana, I drank from the cart,
I spent all of my money,
I went to sleep alone. Hey!
Gray horse, ashen tail,
Tell me, girl, do you like me. Hey!
There is water standing on the trail,
it seems that with our love
nothing will happen.
Hey! Hey!
Kasia is plump

The bug will fall, the fly will fall,
Johnny will say: Kasia is plump (fat).
The bug falls in, the fly falls in,
Johnny will say: Kasia is plump.
Hey you groomsmen and the in-laws
Gather money for the cradle,
When she has a son,

—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki
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Paweł Łukaszewski: The Last Letter of St. Maximilian to his Mother (U.S. Premiere)
Paweł Łukaszewski is professor of music and Rector at the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw, where he studied with Marian Borkowski and currently teaches and mentors a growing number of young composition students. A prolific composer and choral conductor, Paweł Łukaszewski has had his works recorded on more than 110 CD recordings and performed on more than 400 festivals worldwide. In recent years he has seen great success with British choirs, giving him a strong introduction to the English-speaking choral world. Reviewer Ronald Grames wrote in Fanfare, after listing some of the greats of sacred choral music including Górecki, Pärt, and Taverner, “… it is clear that Paweł Łukaszewski belongs in this company of titans.”
Paweł Łukaszewski’s musical style is characterized by what critic Mark Rochester calls “luscious and luminous qualities.” Łukaszewski writes primarily sacred music, and there is a power to his work that feels spirit-filled and urgent. His catalog is so tilted toward a cappella work that one could easily create an entire concert (or three) consisting of his own works alone. He also doesn’t shy away from difficult texts: the lyric here comes from the Auschwitz concentration camp.

St. Maximilian was born as Raymund Kolbe in 1894 in the Kingdom of Poland, which at the time was part of the Russian Empire. Kolbe was a Polish Conventual Franciscan friar. He had a vision of the Virgin Mary when he was 12 and decided to devote his life to her service. Kolbe founded the monastery at Niepokanalów, which at one time was the largest in the world. He also founded monasteries in Japan and India.

Niepokanalów became a major publishing center, including anti-Nazi propaganda during World War II. For this, and for hiding 1,500 Jewish refugees, Kolbe was arrested by the Gestapo, taken to Pawiak and then imprisoned at Auschwitz, where he volunteered to take the place of a family man in the hunger bunker. This was a wing of the camp created to warn against escapes by subjecting its prisoners to death by starvation. Kolbe led prayers to the Virgin Mary with his fellow prisoners and remained calm to the end. The guards gave him a lethal injection of carbolic acid, for which Kolbe raised his left arm and calmly awaited death. When canonized in 1982 by Pope John Paul II in 1982, St. Maximilian became the patron saint of drug addicts, prisoners, families, and the pro-life movement. Niepokanalów has also become an important devotional site for laypeople.
1994 was the centenary year of the saint’s birth. The friars of Niepokanalów commissioned Paweł Łukaszewski to set St. Maximilian’s last letter to his mother, written at Auschwitz, to choral music. Father Roman Soczewka from the monastery writes:

It was the composer’s aim to express the prayerful, mystic character of the text by placing a maximum limitation on resources and musical elements, both rhythmic and harmonic…The composition is quiet, but at the same time full of unusual tension, indicative of the atmosphere and mood of the place from which the letter was sent.

One might say that this piece of music, like its text, is a masterpiece of understatement. One example is line, “U mnie jest wszystko dobrze” (“everything is fine with me”), which is so shatteringly modest in its untruth; the composer puts an unusual amount of harmonic tension right there before calming down a bit.

Mamo, Mamo. 
Moja kochaña Mamo.
Pod koniec miesiąca maja,
przyjechałem z transportem do obozu w Oświęcimiu.
U mnie jest wszystko dobrze, kochana Mamo,
bądź spokojna o mnie i o moje zdrowie,
gdyż dobry Bóg jest na każdym miejscu
i z wielką miłością pamięta o wszystkich i o wszystkim.
Byłoby dobrze, przed moim następnym listem, nie pisać do mnie,
Ponieważ nie wiem, jak długo tu pozostanę?
Z serdечноzmi pozdrowieniami i pocałunkami,

Kolbe Rajmund.
—translated from the German original into Polish by Fr. Roman Soczewka

Witold Lutosławski, arr. Paweł Łukaszewski: 10 Polish Folk Songs on Soldier Themes (U.S. Premiere)

9. Już to myj siódmy roczek—this is a tune from Kraków, collected by Kolberg.

Już to myj siódmy roczek
Seven Years Are Past
Już to myj siódmy roczek,
Seven years are past,
Jedzie z wojny kochaneczek, hej, hej.
My dear love returns from the war, hey, hey.
Kasia Jasia zobaczyła,
Kasia saw Johnny.
Cztery stoły przeskoczyła, hej, hej.
She jumped over the table four times, hey, hey.
Witaj Jasiu mój najmilszy,
Hello Johnny my love,
Wszakżeś ty mi był najpierwszy, hej, hej.
You are my one and only, hey, hey.
—Trad. Folk lyric
—trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

10. Małgorzatka—this tune is from Mazovia, a whirling dance describing Maggie as she dances with the soldiers.

Małgorzatka
Margaret
Za owczarnią, za górami,
Behind the sheepfold, behind the mountains.
Tańcowała Małgorzatka z żołnierzami.
Margaret danced with the soldiers.
Woła ojciec, woła matka:
Mother called out, father called out:
Pójdź do domu, pójdź do domu, Małgorzatka.
Go home, go home, Margaret.
Nie pójdę ja, idźcie sami,
Jeszcze tańca nie skończyła z żołnierzami.
Tańcowała i płakała:
Czego ja też, czego ja też doczekała.
— Trad. Folk lyric

I will not come home alone,
I am not finished dancing with the soldiers.
She dances and cried:
This is what I’ve been waiting for.
— trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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**Paweł Łukaszewski: Prayer for the Homeland**

This is an *a cappella* movement from the composer’s famous *Missa Pro Patria* (Mass for the Country), premiered in 1998 in Częstochowa. It features a disarmingly simple alternation of chant and block chords. The lyrics are by a famous priest who was a leading voice for reform during the early years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

One the page, this piece is disarmingly simple, but once again, Łukaszewski pulls on the heartstrings. Starting in D major, he alternates block chords, a soprano line soaring over long-held notes in the other voices, and a reciting tone marked “quasi canto gregoriano” (like Gregorian chant), which propels the music along while remaining in a contemplative vein. The composer moves up to E major and then finally to F-sharp minor, heightening the tension and adding sharps before a final moment of repose.

Boże, Rządczo i Panie narodów,
z ręki i karności Twojej racz nas nie wypuszczać,
a za przyczyną Najświętszej Panny, Królowej naszej,
 błogosław Ojczyźnie naszej, by Tobie zawsze wierna,
chwaleb przynosiła Imienio Twemu a syny swe wiodła ku szczęśliwości.

God, Governor and Lord of Nations,
Please do not leave us.
And because of the Blessed Virgin, our Queen,
Bless our Homeland that it may always be faithful to you.
And she led her sons to happiness.

Wszechmogący wieczny Boże,
spuść nam szeroką i głęboką miłość ku braciom
i najmiłej Matce, Ojczyźnie naszej,
byśmy jej i ludowi Twemu,
swych pożytków zapomniawszy,
mogli służyć uczciwie.

Almighty Eternal God
Let us have wide and deep love for our brothers.
And the most beloved Mother, our homeland,
Serve our Homeland and people honestly.

Ześlij Ducha Świętego na sługi Twoje,
rządy kraju naszego sprawujące,
by wedle woli Twojej ludem sobie powierzonym
mądrze i sprawiedliwie zdołali kierować.

Send the Holy Spirit to the servants,
And governments of our country,
by Your will entrusted to the people entrusted to You
they managed to manage wisely and fairly.

Przez Chrystusa, Pana naszego. Amen.
— Rev. Piotr Skarga

Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.
— trans. Jadwiga Gorecki

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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 was held on Dec. 1 at Northeastern Illinois University.

¡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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2936 N. Southport Ave., Room 226 | Chicago, IL 60657
Phone (773) 281-7820 | Fax (773) 435-6453
info@chicagoacappella.org | www.chicagoacappella.org
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.

**Baritone 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 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 Requiems, 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.

**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.

Tenor **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*, 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. 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.

Recognized for her flexibility and warmth of tone, American soprano **Katelyn Lee** is making her mark in Chicago and across the United States. Katelyn is a frequent performer at Lyric Opera of Chicago. She recently understudied roles in two Lyric Unlimited productions: Doris Parker in *Charlie Parker’s Yardbird* and the Female Narrator in *Jason and the Argonauts*. She was also featured in Lyric’s *My Fair Lady*. Katelyn has performed a variety of opera and musical theatre roles including Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*, Antonia in *Man of La Mancha*, Mizzi in the American premiere of *The Ball at the Savoy*, Cunegonde in *Candide*, Madame Goldentrill in *The Impresario*, and Zerlina in
Don Giovanni. Additionally, Katelyn is an accomplished singer of concert repertoire. She has performed various works with venues such as Chicago Symphony, Music of the Baroque, Indianapolis Symphony, and Grant Park Symphony.

Woo Chan (Chaz) Lee, bass, is a Korea-born and US-educated bass-baritone. He is a proud resident of Hyde Park, where he is also pursuing a graduate degree in Music History at the University of Chicago. When not enjoying a pint with friends or strolling around Promontory Point with Chloe, he splits his time between writing, teaching, organizing for his graduate employee union (#YesGSU), and singing with various ensembles in the Chicago-area.

Soprano Kristin Lelm 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 makes her second appearance 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.

A skilled and versatile musician, mezzo-soprano Chelsea Lyons has been equally lauded in concert, operatic, and choral performances. Her soloist engagements include Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms; Bach’s Magnificat; Vivaldi’s Dixit Dominus; Handel’s Messiah; and Mozart’s Great Mass in C Minor and Requiem in D minor, as well as the premiere of Samuel Carl Adams’ Light Readings. Chelsea recently premiered David Clay Mettens’ Ink Dark as soloist with the Grammy-nominated Spektral Quartet at Constellation in Chicago. On the operatic stage, Chelsea has performed the roles of Cherubino (Le nozze di Figaro), Hansel (Hansel & Gretel), Nancy (Albert Herring), and originated the role of Ambrosia in A Wake or a Wedding (Richard Pearson Thomas). As a choral musician, Chelsea performs regularly with Philadelphia’s Grammy-winning new music ensemble The Crossing and can be heard on their albums Sound from the Bench (Hearne), Canticles of the Holy Wind (J. L. Adams), and If There Were Water (Minakakis/Brown). She has also performed with the Grant Park Music Festival Chorus, Music of the Baroque, Chicago a cappella, and Madison Choral Project. This spring, Chelsea will travel to Orange County, CA to perform as a soloist with Pacific Chorale and the Musica Angelica baroque orchestra. Chelsea is a graduate of California State University, Fullerton (’08) and Northwestern University (MM ’17), and has studied with James Toland, Janet Smith, W. Stephen Smith, and Karen Brunssen.
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.

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
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...

BIOGRAPHIES cont.

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 (Qiandongnan) 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.
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.

Historical consultant Brian Zakem is a mostly retired mental health clinician, consultant, and trainer (40+ years). He now divides his time as a Minneapolis-based family genealogist/historian and occasional public educator, an interreligious bridge-builder/facilitator in the region and beyond (co-founder of Chicago's Neighbors In Faith), social-justice activist, and regional sustainability leader. As a proud partner of one active grand parenting team, mostly led by his wife Carolyn, we focus on 3 descendants, Zavi, Matan, and Zev, 9, 6, and 10 months! Hopefully they will grow up to be a proud and contributing part of the 21st generation of Za’k's.

See what other members of our ensemble are up to this winter!

Joe Labozetta is living the monastic life for a week at St. Meinrad Archabbey, as part of the National Winter Pastoral Chant Conference, with the purpose of studying with sacred chant scholars and conductors. Looking to apply technique and repertoire to the newly-formed St. Josaphat Schola, a quintet of pro singers featured twice monthly at the 5pm Saturday Mass at St. Josaphat Church. Exciting Schola rep besides chant includes polyphonic Mass movements and motets from Renaissance masters like Byrd, Palestrina, Victoria, di Lasso.

He also spent a week in Acapulco with his lovely wife, as “we try to forget what the word “winter” means.”

This February, Sarah Ponder is singing in performances of “La Traviata” at Lyric Opera of Chicago and Mozart Requiem with the Chicago Symphony. She is also continuing her outreach work with The Lullaby Project through Carnegie Hall and The Negaunee Institute in addition to her teaching at Loyola University. She is excited to rejoin her Chicago a cappella colleagues this spring for Dynamic Duos!
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.

**DONATE**

*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 at info@chicagoacappella.org.

**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.

**CONNECT**

Sign up for our *e-newsletter* at chicagoacappella.org. Find us on Facebook at facebook.com/chicagoacappella, Twitter @chicagoacappella, and Instagram @chi_acappella

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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 January 1, 2018. 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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