

New Dominion Chorale  
Thomas Beveridge, Artistic Director  
Twenty-fourth Concert Season, 2014-2015

Sunday, October 26, 2014, at 4:00 p.m.

**Acis and Galatea**  
G.F. Handel

Featuring finalists of the Washington International Vocal Competition:  
Abigail Mitchell, Soprano — Allan Palacios Chan, Tenor  
Matthew Hill, Tenor — Jeffrey Tarr, Bass  
with orchestra

Sunday, December 7, 2014, at 4:00 p.m.

**Welcome, Yule!**

Benjamin Britten: Ceremony of Carols  
Thomas Beveridge: Welcome, Lord! — Advent

Cantata

Laura Strickling, Soprano — Linda Maguire, Mezzo-  
soprano

Issachah Savage, Tenor — Jason Rylander, Tenor  
David Brundage, Bass

Thomas Pandolfi, Piano

Children's Chorus of Washington.

Joan Gregoryk, Founder and Artistic Director

Rev. John Wimberly, Narrator  
with orchestra

Sunday, May 3, 2015, at 4:00 p.m.

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and  
Classic Musical Theater**

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Tracy Olivera, Soprano  
Steve Cramer, Tenor  
Bob McDonald, Baritone

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Alexandria  
CHORAL  
SOCIETY

American Harvest

OCTOBER 18, 2014 AT 8 P.M.

45<sup>th</sup>  
Season

# *American Harvest*

## **Alexandria Choral Society**

Brian Gendron, *conductor*

Robin Beckman, *piano*

Eric Schnobrick, *piano*

Come, Ye Thankful People, Come

George J. Elvey  
*arr.* Mack Wilberg

The Reapers All with Their Sharp Sickles

*arr.* Seth Houston  
Heather Philips and Elizabeth Fielden, *sopranos*

Shenandoah

*arr.* James Erb

Homeward Bound

Marta Keen, *arr.* Mack Wilberg

Wayfaring Stranger

*arr.* Robert DeCormier

Mary Gaskins, *soprano*

Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal

*arr.* Alice Parker

The Promise of Living

Aaron Copland

The Road Home

*arr.* Stephen Paulus

Erin Barnett, *soprano*

The Old Church

Stephen Paulus

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

*arr.* Mack Wilberg

Old Time Religion

*arr.* Moses Hogan

Sara Alipanah, Kate Campbell Deglans,  
Kristina Meacham, Jennifer Pachon, *soloists*

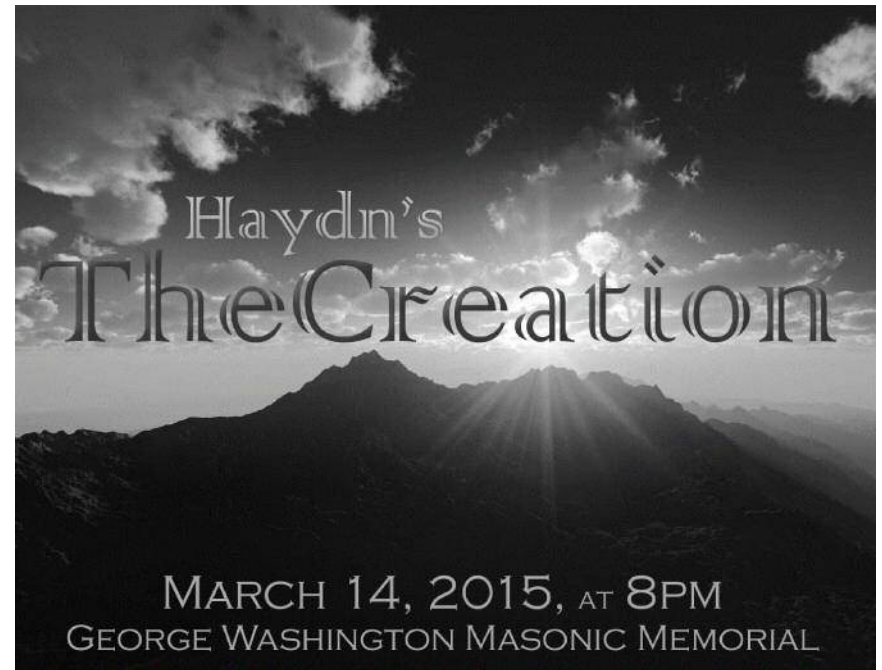
Let Me Fly

*arr.* Robert DeCormier

Scott Snyder, *baritone*

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*'Tis the Season*  
featuring  
*Vivaldi's Gloria*



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2014 AT 8 P.M.  
GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC MEMORIAL

TEXTS

COME, YE THANKFUL PEOPLE, COME

Henry Alford

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Come, ye thankful people, come,<br>Raise the song of harvest home;<br>All is safely gathered in,<br>Ere the winter storms begin.<br>God, our Maker, doth provide<br>For our wants to be supplied:<br>Come to God's own temple, come,<br>Raise the song of harvest home.            | 3. For the Lord, our God, shall come,<br>And shall take his harvest home;<br>From his field shall in that day<br>All offenses purge away,<br>Give his angels charge at last<br>In the fire the tares to cast,<br>But the fruitful ears to store<br>In his garner evermore. |
| 2. All the world is God's own field,<br>Fruit unto his praise to yield;<br>Wheat and tares together sown<br>Unto joy or sorrow grown;<br>First the blade, and then the ear,<br>Then the full corn shall appear:<br>Lord of harvest, grant that we<br>Wholesome grain and pure may be. | 4. Even so, Lord, quickly come<br>To thy final harvest-home;<br>Gather thou thy people in,<br>Free from sorrow, free from sin;<br>There, forever purified,<br>In thy presence to abide:<br>Come, with all thine angels, come,<br>Raise the glorious harvest home.          |

THE REAPERS ALL WITH THEIR SHARP SICKLES

Anonymous

The fields are all white, the harvest is near,  
The reapers all with their sharp sickles appear,  
To reap down the wheat, and gather in barns,  
While wild plants of nature are left for to burn.

Twill all be in vain, the mountains must flee,  
The rocks fly like hailstones and shall no more be;  
The earth it will shake, the seas shall retire,  
And this solid world will then all be on fire.

Come then, O my soul, and think on that day,  
When all things in nature shall cease and decay.  
The trumpet shall sound, the angels appear,  
To reap down the earth, both the wheat and the tare.

SHENANDOAH

American Folksong

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. O Shenando', I long to see you,<br>And hear your rolling river,<br>O Shenando', I long to see you,<br>'Way, we're bound away,<br>Across the wide Missouri. | 2. I long to see your smiling valley,<br>And hear your rolling river,<br>I long to see your smiling valley.<br>'Way, we're bound away,<br>Across the wide Missouri. |
|---|---|

3. 'Tis sev'n long years since last I see you,  
And hear your rolling river,  
'Tis sev'n long years since last I see you,  
'Way, we're bound away,  
Across the wide Missouri.

O Shenando', I long to see you,  
And hear your rolling river,  
O Shenando', I long to see you,  
'Way, we're bound away,  
Across the wide Missouri.

#### **HOMEWARD BOUND**

Marta Keen

In the quiet misty morning when the moon has gone to bed,  
When the sparrows stop their singing and the sky is clear and red,  
When the summer's ceased its gleaming, when the corn is past its prime,  
When adventure's lost its meaning, I'll be homeward bound in time.

Bind me not to the pasture; chain me not to the plow.  
Set me free to find my calling and I'll return to you somehow.

If you find it's me you're missing, if you're hoping I'll return,  
To your thoughts I'll soon be list'ning; in the road I'll stop and turn.  
Then the wind will set me racing as my journey nears its end,  
And the path I'll be retracing when I'm homeward bound again.

Bind me not to the pasture; chain me not to the plow.  
Set me free to find my calling and I'll return to you somehow.

#### **WAYFARING STRANGER**

Sacred Harp

I'm just a poor wayfaring stranger a-trav'lin' through this world of woe,  
But there's no sickness toil nor danger in that fair land to which I go.  
I'm going there to meet my father, I'm going there no more to roam,  
I'm only going over Jordan, I'm only going over home.

I know dark clouds will gather o'er me, I know my way is rough and steep,  
Yet beaut'ous field lie just before me, Where God's redeemed their vigil keep.  
I'm going there to see my mother, She said she'd meet me when I come,  
I'm only going over Jordan, I'm only going over home.

#### **HARK, I HEAR THE HARPS ETERNAL**

Traditional

Hark, I hear the harps eternal	<i>refrain:</i> Hallelujah, hallelujah,
Ringing on the farther shore,	Hallelujah, praise the Lamb,
As I near those swollen waters,	Hallelujah, hallelujah,
With their deep and solemn roar.	Glory to the great I AM.

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### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Alexandria Choral Society wishes to express its appreciation to the following persons and organizations:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Heather Harris Roehmer  
Mimi Stevens

Thanks to Port City Brewing Co. and Rocklands Barbeque,  
who helped make our Oktoberfest event a success!



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

The Alexandria Choral Society appreciates the support that makes this concert season possible. As always, the financial resources needed for concert productions go far beyond the amount raised by the prices of tickets. We encourage you to consider making a contribution to the Alexandria Choral Society. Your gift will help to ensure that the splendid works of traditional and contemporary composers continue to come to life in our community. Your contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Contributors will be listed in our program (unless you specify otherwise). Write to P.O. Box 406, Alexandria, VA 22313 or call 703-951-7849.

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Alexandria Choral Society is proud to be a part of the rich tapestry of arts in our community. It is only by the generosity of our patrons that we are able to add our threads to the weave.  
Thank you for your contribution.

And my soul though stained  
with sorrow,  
Fading as the light of day,  
Passes swiftly o'er those waters  
To the city far away.  
*refrain*

Souls have crossed before me,  
saintly,  
To that land of perfect rest;  
And I hear them singing faintly  
In the mansions of the blest.  
*refrain*

### THE PROMISE OF LIVING

Horace Everett (Erik Johns)

The promise of living  
With hope and thanksgiving  
Is born of our loving our friends and our labor,  
The promise of growing,  
With faith and with knowing  
Is born of our sharing our love with our neighbor.  
The promise of living  
The promise of growing  
Is born of our singing in joy and thanksgiving.

For many a year we've known these fields  
And known all the work that makes them yield,  
Are you ready to lend a hand?  
We're ready to work, we're ready to lend a hand.  
By working together we'll bring in the harvest,  
We'll bring in the harvest, the blessings of harvest,  
We plant each row with seeds of grain,  
And Providence sends us the sun and the rain,  
By lending a hand, By lending an arm,  
Bring in from the land, Bring out from the farm,  
Bring out the blessings of harvest.

Give thanks there was sunshine,  
Give thanks there was rain,  
Give thanks we have hands to deliver the grain,  
O let us be joyful,  
O let us be grateful,  
Come join us in thanking the Lord for His blessing.

The promise of ending  
In right understanding  
is peace in our own hearts and peace with our neighbor.

O let us sing our song, and let our song be heard.  
Let's sing our song with our hearts, and find a promise in that song.

The promise of living  
The promise of growing  
The promise of ending is labor and sharing and loving.

### THE ROAD HOME

Tell me where is the road I can call my own,  
That I left, that I lost, So long ago?  
All these years I have wandered,  
Oh when will I know  
There's a way, there's a road  
That will lead me home?

After wind, after rain, when the dark is done,  
As I wake from a dream in the gold of day,  
Through the air there's a calling  
From far away,  
There's a voice I can hear  
That will lead me home.

Rise up, follow me, Come away, is the call,  
With the love in your heart as the only song;  
There is no such beauty as where you belong,  
Rise up, follow me, I will lead you home.

### THE OLD CHURCH

The old church leans nearby a well-worn road,  
Upon a hill that has no grass or tree,  
The winds from off the prairie now unload  
The dust they bring around it fitfully.

The path that leads up to the open door  
Is worn and grayed by many toiling feet  
Of us who listen to the Bible lore  
And once again the old-time hymns repeat.

And every Sabbath morning we are still  
Returning to the altar waiting there.  
A hush, a pray'r, a pause, and voices fill  
The Master's House with a triumphant air.

The old church leans awry and looks quite odd,  
But it is beautiful to us and God.

### COME, THOU FOUNT OF EVERY BLESSING

Come, thou Fount of ev'ry blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;

Michael Dennis Browne

Della B. Vik

Robert Robinson

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Brian Gendron	Artistic Director



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**P.O. Box 406**  
**Alexandria, VA 22313**  
**703-951-7849**  
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**Alexandria Choral Society**  
Brian Gendron, *Artistic Director*  
Robin Beckman, *Accompanist*

**Sopranos**

Sara Alipanah  
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Erin Barnett  
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Olivia Prevost Karr  
Margaret McLaughlin  
Jennifer Pachon  
Heather Philips  
Andrea Steinacker  
Grace Van Der Veer

**Tenors**

Cameron Farley  
Elliot Findley  
Seth Hudson  
Howard Jaffe  
Jason Kezmarsky  
Alan Morris  
Farshad Negarestan  
Ben Reigner  
Kevin Sapp  
Brent Schultheis

**Altos**

Trudy Beddow  
Patricia Beeson  
Anne Buckborough  
Patricia Burson  
Heather Cruz  
Malia DuMont  
Julia Falkowski  
Emily Goodell  
Becky Grisso  
Ally Manno  
Kristina Meacham  
Carol Proudfit  
Amanda Ridlington  
Sunrita Sarkar  
Anne Simpson  
Erin Sutherland

**Basses**

Rocky Ebener  
Tom Gianetti  
Greg Gloor  
Joshua Heit  
Jeff Kline  
Terry Langendoen  
Russell Moll  
David Pritzker  
Vell Rives  
Scott Snyder

Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of thy redeeming love.

Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above.

Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wand'ring from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
interposed his precious blood.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above.

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let thy goodness, like a fetter,  
Bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,  
Seal it for thy courts above.

**OLD TIME RELIGION**

Traditional

Give me that old time religion, give me that old time religion.  
Give me that old time 'ligion, it's good enough for me.

It was good for the Hebrew children, it was good for the Hebrew children.  
It was good for the Hebrew children, it's good enough for me.

It was good for Paul and Silas, it was good for Paul and Silas.  
It was good for Paul and Silas, it's good enough for me.

It was good for my grandmother, it was good for my grandmother.  
It was good for my grandmother, it's good enough for me.

Give me that old time religion, give me that old time religion.  
Give me that old time 'ligion, it's good enough for me.

## LET ME FLY

## Spiritual

'Way down yonder in the middle of the fiel'  
Angel a-workin' at the chariot wheel.  
Not so partic'lar 'bout workin' at the wheel,  
I jus' wan' t see how the charion feel.

*Refrain:* Oh let me fly, Oh let me fly to Mount Zion, Lord, Lord.

Meet that hypocrite on the street.  
First thing he do is show his teeth.  
Next thing he do is tell a lie.  
Well, the best thing to do is pass him by.

*Refrain*

I got a mother in the Promised Land.  
I ain't gonna stop 'til I take her hand.  
Not so partic'lar, shakin' her hand,  
But I just wan' to get to the Promised Land.

*Refrain*

I heard such a-rumbalin' in the sky,  
I thought mt Lord was passin' by.  
'Twas the good ol' chariot drawin' nigh.  
Well, it shook the earth, swept the sky.

*Refrain*

I want wings, I wan' to fly,  
Oh won't you let me fly to Mount Zion, Lord, Lord?  
Oh let me fly, Oh let me fly to Mount Zion, Lord, Lord.

## PROGRAM NOTES

Harvest and Thanksgiving are the inspiration for the opening program of the Alexandria Choral Society's 45<sup>th</sup> concert season. Traditional American hymns, folksongs and spirituals are given new life in arrangements by modern-day composers, and the program also includes original works by Aaron Copland and Stephen Paulus.

Today, the word "hymn" is used to refer to the words, as well as the tune, but in earlier times the tunes had their own names, so that a book of "hymns" by Isaac Watts had no musical notes, only words. Several of the works on this program are based on tunes whose names may bear no relationship to the text they are associated with – most notably, of course, *St. George's Windsor*. Alice Parker's arrangement of *Hark, I Hear the Harps Eternal* specifies "Tune: *Invitation*" but the name is not unique; there is also a Sacred Harp tune called "Invitation" which is completely different.

The well-known nineteenth-century hymn, *Come, Ye Thankful People, Come*, is actually English, not American, but the arrangement of **George J.**

team for Charpentier's *David et Jonathas*, Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, and a staged production of Handel's *Messiah*. Gendron conducted the world premiere of Sean Pflueger's *Children in the Mist* for Riverbend Opera and was Music Director for Michael Gordon's *Lightning at Our Feet*, which was co-produced by Virginia Tech Theater Arts and New York City's Ridge Theater.

Gendron earned degrees from Central Michigan University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has presented interest sessions and conducted invitational performances for the American Choral Directors Association, Virginia Music Educators Association, and Virginia Music Teachers Association. Gendron currently leads the choirs at St. James Catholic Church in Falls Church, Virginia.



**Robin Beckman** enjoys a versatile career as a pianist and singer working as a soloist, chamber ensemble singer, piano teacher and accompanist. With a voice that "gently glides into heaven" (*Washington Examiner*), she has performed with the Bach Consort, the Boston Early Music Fringe Festival, Washington Master Chorale, at the National Cathedral, and in the quartet Third Practice, which got rave reviews in both the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* for its performance of Andriessen's *La Commedia* with the Great Noise Ensemble. You can also hear her on the Dorian Sono Luminus label singing the Bach Motets and Carissimi's *Jephte*, in which she is a soloist. As a pianist, she also accompanies Six Degree Singers, a choir based in Silver Spring, MD. She studied at Shenandoah University where she accompanied several ensembles, master classes and recitals.

**Eric Schnobrick**, pianist, appears regularly in and around Washington, D.C. with the National Symphony Orchestra, Washington Performing Arts Men and Women of the Gospel Choir, and the Alexandria Choral Society. Also an arts administrator, he is the general manager of the American Youth Philharmonic Orchestras. Mr. Schnobrick spent five seasons as the artistic events and music manager for the Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, NY. During his tenure there, he accompanied events and recitals featuring many world-class artists, as well as working with the Glimmerglass Festival Chorus and Orchestra. He has been engaged by Minnesota Opera as a resident artist, Fort Worth Opera as an assistant conductor both for *Little Women* and the world premiere of Thomas Pasatieri's *Frau Margot*, and by Palm Beach Opera as an assistant chorus master and outreach conductor. He has further experience as an educator working as a coach/conductor at the Seagle Music Colony and the Young Artists Training Programme at the New National Theatre in Tokyo.





## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Founded in 1970, the **Alexandria Choral Society** aspires to enhance the cultural life of the city of Alexandria and surrounding communities by presenting engaging musical programs at the highest artistic level. ACS ensembles consistently offer meaningful and exciting musical experiences to both singers and audiences through diverse repertoire, education, community outreach, and performance excellence.



**Brian Gendron** serves as Artistic Director of the Alexandria Choral Society (ACS.) Since joining the organization in 2009, the choir has shared the stage with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra for Mozart's *Requiem*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, Holst's *The Planets*, and the world premiere of Kim Allen Kluge's *River Poem*. They have presented Bach's *Komm, Jesu, komm*, Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9*, Brahms' *Schicksalslied*, and Pärt's *Berliner Messe*, and have led Handel's *Messiah* at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Pro Coro Alexandria, a chamber choir founded in 2012 and selected from the ACS roster, premiered Truman Harris and David Teie's *...again and ever again* with Eclipse Chamber Orchestra and performed at the National Gallery of Art. Both ensembles will appear with the Virginia Chamber Orchestra this season.

With a great passion for choral-orchestral repertoire, Gendron was on the podium for Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, Haydn's *Lord Nelson Mass*, and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*. He prepared Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms* for the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra and Vaughan Williams' *Dona Nobis Pacem* for the New River Valley Symphony. Gendron conducted the Kansas City Baroque Consortium in a performance of Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, and led a series of concerts featuring the cantatas of J.S. Bach, as well as his *Mass in B minor*.

Previously, Gendron served as Artistic Director of the Grammy Award winning Maryland Boy Choir, who appeared at the Music Center at Strathmore and Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, as well as in concert performances of Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* with Mariinsky Opera and Puccini's *La Bohème* with Baltimore Concert Opera. His previous teaching appointments include Conductor-in-Residence at Hollins University and Director of Choral Activities at Virginia Tech. His university ensembles appeared in Carnegie Hall, Brooklyn Academy of Music's Howard Gilman Opera Theater, and the Washington National Cathedral.

Gendron served as Chorus Master for Opera Roanoke productions of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, Britten's *Noye's Fludde*, Verdi's *Macbeth* and *Otello*, and Beethoven's *Fidelio*. He also joined the American Opera Theater

**Elvey's** (1816 -1893) tune, *St. George's Windsor*, was written for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir by native Utahn **Mack Wilberg**. The words, by the **Rev. Henry Alford** (1810-1871), were first published with the title "After Harvest" in 1844, and consisted of seven verses. Alford himself later reduced the number of verses to four, but he also complained that revisions had been made without his approval. (Even the score for Wilberg's arrangement indicates that some words have been altered.) The hymn has enjoyed great popularity in America as a quintessential musical message for the celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday.

Mack Wilberg has been the director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir since 2008. Born in 1955, he is well-known as a composer, arranger, conductor, and pianist. After graduating from Brigham Young University, where he later served as a professor, he received a master's and a PhD in music from the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California.

A cappella singing was a major part of community life in late eighteenth-century rural New England, where keyboard instruments were non-existent, and itinerant singing-school teachers brought the works of their contemporaries to the populace. *The Reapers All with Their Sharp Sickles* is based on the hymn tune *Meditation*, by **Elisha West**, who taught music in the schools of Woodstock, Vermont, and was known as a fine musician. The text is of unknown origin, but is closely related to that of *Harvest Hymn*, a composition by West's colleague Jeremiah Ingalls. In his arrangement, **Seth Houston** has included text from *Harvest Hymn* as well as *Meditation*.

Born in 1974, Seth Houston, like Mack Wilberg, has chosen the Thornton School of Music at USC for his pursuit of a Doctorate of Musical Arts in choral conducting. A conductor and composer, his arrangement of West's tune is so profoundly contemporary that the work may as easily be perceived as an original composition. The melody may be recognizable as West's *Meditation*, but the harmonies are definitely twenty-first century. And when the chorus sings of the destruction of the earth, it seems to resonate all too well with our fears today.

Founder of the Richmond Symphony Chorus, **James Erb** holds degrees from Colorado College, The Austrian State Academy of Music, Indiana University, and Harvard. His arrangement of the American folk song *Shenandoah* was written for the choir of the University of Richmond, where he taught singing, theory, composition, and music history from 1954 to 1994, as well as directing the University's choruses.

"Finding your true calling in life; knowing that those who love you trust that you will return... I wrote this song for a loved one who was embarking upon a new phase of life's journey, to express the soul's yearning to grow and change." These are the words of **Marta Keen**, writing on Facebook about her most popular composition, *Homeward Bound*. The composer has worked as a teacher of elementary school music and English while earning a master's degree in Educational Media, writing and directing children's musicals. She studied composition at Pacific Lutheran University. Once again we are indebted to

Mack Wilberg for this arrangement he wrote for the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

**Robert DeCormier**'s publisher refers to "*Sacred Harp*" as the source for *Wayfaring Stranger*, but a footnote in the 1971 *Original Sacred Harp*, *Denson Revision* states that it did not appear in any edition of the *Sacred Harp* prior to the 1936 Denson Revision. This arrangement uses the first two verses only. The opening is identical to the lead (tenor) and bass lines of the *Sacred Harp* version, but when the women's parts are added the harmonization is very different.

DeCormier born in 1922, is a graduate of the Juilliard School. He is known as a composer of choral music and ballet scores, as well as an arranger of spirituals. Harry Belafonte and Peter, Paul and Mary were among the artists he worked with, and he is credited with opening up music of other cultures to the New York Choral Society, where he served as Music Director from 1970-1987.

Anyone who has been privileged to attend a musical event where **Alice Parker** is one of the featured guests cannot help but be struck by her love of singing as a participatory activity. She has a way of getting the crowd singing – enthusiastically and in parts, without printed scores, that clearly shows why Robert Shaw had her do so many arrangements for his Chorale. Born in 1925, she graduated from Smith College and from there went to Juilliard, where she studied with Robert Shaw. A quote from her website: "Alice Parker envisions a theory or composition class where everyone sings and arrangements grow out of evoked responses to the sung melody."

**Aaron Copland** (1900-1990), considered one of the foremost American composers of the twentieth century, is known for the way his music reflects the American folk idiom. Born in 1900 to Russian emigré parents, this most American of composers must receive major credit for making the classical arts accessible to the people. His ballets, film scores, and other orchestral works incorporated American folk tunes and lively popular rhythms. Thus, unlike much "classical" music, they have a way of sounding familiar even at the first hearing.

Copland's second opera, *The Tender Land*, was commissioned by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II for a television production, but it was not produced until a stage premiere in 1954 by the New York City Opera. It was not well received, and has languished for the most part, with the exception of *The Promise of Living*, which is often performed as a stand-alone choral work or anthem. The orchestral accompaniment has been arranged for four-hand piano, which makes it more widely accessible for community choruses and church choirs. The way the voice parts interact with and play off each other create a sound that seems to embody Alice Parker's dream.

Unlike Copland, **Stephen Paulus** is well-known as a composer of opera. Born in New Jersey in 1949, he moved with his family to Minneapolis at the age of two. He attended the University of Minnesota, and earned a PhD in music. In this concert, he is featured both as an arranger and as a composer. First, we hear his arrangement of the tune *Prospect* from the 1935 *Southern Harmony*, using as text a poem by **Michael Dennis Browne**. (Some listeners may find the tune familiar; it is also sung with the words, "The lone, wild bird ...") Browne

and Paulus have been frequent collaborators, working together on oratorio, opera, and choral songs. Browne's poem provides another perspective on the premise of Marta Keen's *Homeward Bound*, and is especially poignant in the face of Paulus' uncertain recovery from a serious stroke which he suffered in the summer of 2013.

Paulus the composer is represented by his setting of **Della Blanche Vik**'s poem *The Old Church*. Vik (1889-1986) was a photographer and self-taught artist, and her sonnet reflects her skill at visual imagery. Paulus has written a beautifully appropriate setting for eight voices, which was commissioned by the Festival Choir of Madison, Wisconsin.

*Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing* is another of Mack Wilberg's hymn arrangements. The hymn, by **Robert Robinson** (1735-1790), is here sung using a tune of American folk origin, commonly known as *Nettleton*. Robinson was a pastor who wrote the words at the age of 22 in the mid-eighteenth century.

The Wikipedia article provides eight different versions of the text, one of which is described thus: "Many choirs, including the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, sing it as follows, in an arrangement by Mack Wilberg. It is essentially the modern hymnal version, except that verse 2 is split into two parts and the last half of verse 3 is appended to each part to form two verses."

In the first line of verse 2, we encounter the perhaps unfamiliar word "Ebenezer." The word means "Stone of Help," and refers to the stone the prophet Samuel erected as a monument in thanks for help received from the Lord.

**Moses Hogan** (1957 - 2003), who died far too young of a brain tumor, was born in New Orleans and studied at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Juilliard School, and Louisiana State University. A notable concert pianist, he was a leading arranger of African American spirituals, and editor of a number of books; the best known is probably *The Oxford Book of Spirituals*. The list of his arrangements includes many favorites, as well as many that are unfamiliar. With so many to choose from, it would always be difficult to settle on just one, but *Old Time Religion* is surely a worthy choice. With opportunities for several chorus members to have a chance at a solo, while the rest get to provide a variety of vocal accompaniments, it's fun to sing as well as to listen to.

The finale is another spiritual, *Let Me Fly*, this one arranged by Robert DeCormier. Each two-line verse is followed by the enthusiastic request, "Let me fly to Mount Zion, Lord, Lord."

So "let us sing our song, and let our song be heard.  
Let's sing our song with our hearts, and find a promise in that song."

— Mimi Stevens