



*Alexandria*  
CHORAL  
SOCIETY

refuge

SATURDAY, JUNE 25, 2022 | 7:30PM

WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA

*A portion of this evening's ticket revenue  
will be donated to the  
Northern Virginia Family Services  
Multicultural Center.*

# r e f u g e e

**BRIAN J. ISAAC**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**WEI-HAN WU**  
COLLABORATING PIANIST

**SAMANTHA HEGRE**  
CELLIST

**MICHAEL BARRANCO**  
PERCUSSIONIST

## REFUGE

From my spirit's gray defeat,  
From my pulse's flagging beat,  
From my hopes that turned to sand  
Sifting through my close-clenched hand,  
From my own fault's slavery,  
If I can sing, I still am free.  
For with my singing I can make  
A refuge for my spirit's sake,  
A house of shining words, to be  
My fragile immortality.

*Sara Teasdale (1884–1933)*

## ELAINE HAGENBERG

## UKRANIAN FOLK SONG

O you've departed and abandoned me,  
And I, poor thing, am crying.  
I cried out my eyes day and night  
So that I don't see the world anymore.

## TRADITIONAL

## 2 PROGRAM

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### EVEN WHEN HE IS SILENT

KIM ANDRÉ ARNESEN (b. 1980)

I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.  
I believe in love even when I feel it not.  
I believe in God even when He is silent.

*Anonymous*

### MISERERE MEI

ANTONIO LOTTI (1665–1740)

Pro Coro Alexandria

Miserere mei, Deus,  
secundum magnam  
misericordiam tuam; et  
secundum multitudinem  
miserationem tuarum, dele  
iniquitatem meam.

Have mercy upon me, O God,  
according to thy loving  
kindness: according unto the  
multitude of thy tender  
mercies blot out my  
transgressions.

*Psalm 50*

### REFUGE

JONATHAN KOLM

Catherine Harsono, *soprano* Kristina Meacham, *alto*

#### I. EXILE

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,  
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;  
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand  
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame  
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name  
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand  
Glow world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command  
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.  
“Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!” cries she  
With silent lips. “Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!”

*Emma Lazarus (1849–87), The New Colossus*

#### II. JOURNEY (Pro Coro Alexandria)

in it we clip *it* comics

Appa, our sheets are sails when those people came  
they trapped the wind that leaves your body behind

### 3 PROGRAM

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so we find a piece of *it* land  
in it we clip *it* the postage stamps

Papa, our letters are shirts    when those people came  
they stripped the night that leaves your body behind

so we loosen the *it* soil  
in it we clip *it* the obituaries

Bapa, our names are masks    when those people came  
they carve out the eyes that leave your body behind

so we dig the *it* damp  
in it we clip *it* the headlines

Naana, our rice is sand    when those people came  
they filled the bowls that leave your body behind

so we peel back the *it* sod  
in it we clip *it* the coupons

Baba, our blood is water    when those people came  
they drained the well that leaves your body behind

so we fill it with *it* sky  
in it we clip *it* the tongue

Abbaa, our cries are coups    when those people come  
they will steal the sons who leave your body behind

*Divya Victor, BEDS: N 10° 45' 55" / E 78° 42' 35"*

### III. ARRIVAL

In school yards, kids play.  
No skin color, nor nationality  
Spoils their fun time.

I came to America  
Made it home.  
Oh, Don't fence me in

Holding a grandchild,  
Here I'll stay and become in the end  
Soil of this immigrant land

*translated & compiled by Teruko Kumei*

## 4 PROGRAM

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### IV. CONFLICT

The Spartan and Sybarite  
Battle in me day and night;  
Evenly matched, relentless, wary,  
Each one cursing his adversary,  
With my slow blood dripping wet  
They fight from sunrise to sunset.

And from sunset the fight goes on,  
I shiver and hear them in the dawn;  
They fight to the death this time, but I  
Care little which will have to die,  
Whichever it is, when the end has come,  
I shall be the defeated one.

*Teasdale*

### V. REFUGE

Asylum	Refuge
Lose my mind	Not an alien
Find it	My country
Grow	Home
Haven	Sanctuary
Room to breathe	Sacred and safe
Stretch out	Wildlife preserved
Listen	Divine

*Amanda Kay Williams, Space*

### THE SEAL LULLABY      ERIC WHITACRE (b. 1970)

Pro Coro Alexandria

Oh! Hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us,  
And black are the waters that sparkled so green.  
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us,  
At rest in the hollows that rustle between.

Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow,  
Oh weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease!  
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee,  
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!

*Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)*

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### SING, MY CHILD      SARAH QUARTEL (b. 1982)

Rasneek Gujral, *soprano*    James Martin, *tenor*

Sing for the promise in each new morning.

Sing for the hope in a new day dawning.

All around is beauty bright!

Wake in the morning and sing, my child.

Dance in the joy of the day unfolding.

Dance as you work and dance as you're learning.

All around is beauty bright!

Take in the day and dance, my child.

*But when troubles come*

*and worry is all that can be found,*

*gather your strength and hear your voice.*

*Sing, my child.*

Laugh in the cool and the fresh of the evening.

Laugh in your triumph, laugh in succeeding.

All around is beauty bright!

Rest in the evening and laugh, my child.

Peace in the stillness and dark of the night.

Peace in the dreams of your silent delights.

All around is beauty bright!

Sleep in the night, and peace, my child.

*Quartel*

### UKRANIAN FOLK SONG      TRADITIONAL

It is sad and cloudy in the valley,

It is difficult to live in a foreign land

Because a foreign land is not your family's place,

The heart weeps like a child.

### THESE THINGS SHALL NEVER DIE

MARK BURROWS (b. 1971)

The pure, the bright, the beautiful

That stirred our hearts in youth,

The impulses to wordless prayer,

The streams of love and truth,

The longing after something lost,

The spirit's yearning cry,

The striving after better hopes —

These things can never die.

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The timid hand stretched forth to aid  
A brother in his need;  
A kindly word in grief's dark hour  
That proves a friend indeed;  
The plea for mercy softly breathed,  
When justice threatens high,  
The sorrow of a contrite heart —  
These things shall never die.

Let nothing pass, for every hand  
Must find some work to do,  
Lose not a chance to waken love,  
Be firm and just and true.  
So shall a light that cannot fade  
Beam on thee from on high,  
And angel voices say to thee —  
“These things shall never die.”

*Charles Dickens (1812–70)*

### MY HEART BE BRAVE

**MARQUES L.A. GARRETT** (b. 1984)

My heart be brave, and do not falter so,  
Nor utter more that deep, despairing wail.  
Thy way is very dark and drear I know,  
But do not let thy strength and courage fail;  
For certain as the raven-winged night  
Is followed by the bright and blushing morn,  
Thy coming morrow will be clear and bright;  
'Tis darkest when the night is furthest worn.

Look up, and out, beyond, surrounding clouds,  
And do not in thine own gross darkness grope,  
Rise up, and casting off thy hind'ring shrouds,  
Cling thou to this, and ever inspiring hope:  
Tho' thick the battle and tho' fierce the fight,  
There is a power making for the right.

*James Weldon Johnson (1871–1938)*

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### HOPE FOR RESOLUTION

A SONG FOR MANDELA & DEKLERK

TRADITIONAL

*“Divinum mysterium,” medieval plainchant &*

*“Thula sizwe,” traditional Zulu*

arr. Paul Caldwell (b. 1963) & Sean Ivory

Of the Father’s love begotten  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the Source, the Ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see  
Evermore and evermore.

O that birth forever blessed,  
When the virgin, full of grace,  
By the Holy Ghost conceiving,  
Bore the Saviour of our race;  
And the Babe, the world’s Redeemer,  
First revealed His sacred face,  
evermore and evermore!

O ye heights of heaven adore Him;  
Angel hosts, His praises sing;  
Powers, dominions, bow before Him,  
and extol our God and King!  
Let no tongue on earth be silent,  
Every voice in concert sing,  
Evermore and evermore!

*Aurelius Prudentius (348–405/13), Corde natus  
trans. John Mason Neale (1818–66)*

Thula sizwe, ungabokhala,	Be still, nation, do not cry,
uJehovah wakho	Jehovah will conquer
uzokunqobela.	for you.
Inkululeko, sizoyithola.	Freedom, we will find it.

*Traditional Zulu*

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Alexandria Choral Society closes out its 2021–22 season with *Refuge*, a social-justice themed program featuring a world-premiere performance of Jonathan Kolm’s crowd-sourced commission of the same name, as well as shorter works relating to change, courage, and community.

Fittingly, the program opens with a work also entitled *Refuge*, composer **Elaine Hagenberg**’s setting of Sara Teasdale’s poem whose title is — you guessed it! — “Refuge.” The composer writes, “In *Refuge*, the piano frantically races out of control, as the cello becomes the voice of heartache and despair. As the poetry unfolds, the choir sings of crushed dreams, confusion, and a yearning for help. But through singing, we can ... lift our voices to offer comfort, beauty, and hope.”

At this moment in history, comfort, beauty, and hope are rather difficult to find, as war rages in Ukraine, and so many are forced into exile. To express our sympathy and solidarity with the people of Ukraine, we have chosen to honor their history by including in this program two Ukrainian folksongs that originated among Ukrainians who fled to western Canada in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first is the lament of a young woman whose husband has left her temporarily alone with their baby on their isolated homestead. It is considered to be a lullaby, though the words are not addressed to the baby. Because we have no native speakers among the choir, the words you hear will be an English translation.

Perhaps that young mother would be comforted if she could join the women of ACS in the haunting 21<sup>st</sup>-century setting of an anonymous text, with its message of hope and faith. The text has been set by several contemporary composers, including commissioned versions for both SSAA and SATB by the Norwegian composer **Kim André Arnesen**.

Born in 1980, Arnesen was educated at the Music Conservatory of Trondheim, and his music was first performed in 1999 by the Nidaros Cathedral Boys’ Choir. The first performance of the SSAA version of *Even When He is Silent* took place at the Nidaros Cathedral on July 30, 2011, sung by the Cathedral Girls’ Choir; the Boys’ Choir premiered the SATB version in November of that year.

The origin of the text is often described as having been found written on the wall of a concentration camp following World War II, possibly Auschwitz; another version of the story

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mentions a basement in Cologne where Jews were given refuge. Still other versions mention a German prisoner of war in an English radio broadcast, and a story by a Jewish writer published in 1947. But whichever story you accept, Arnesen's comments underscore the effect of his musical interpretation of the words: "As I read them, it was a Credo — when everything is dark and difficult in life you might wonder where God is, or if God is there at all. This is about keeping faith in God, love, and hope."

Next, *Pro Coro Alexandria* brings us something completely different in century, language, and style: the opening verses of the penitential psalm, *Miserere Mei, Deus*, in a setting by **Antonio Lotti**. Identified as a Venetian, though he may have been born in Hanover, Lotti began his career at the Cathedral of San Marco as a singer, but worked his way up through the ranks as an organist to become *primo maestro di cappella*. The fact that he spent much of his life in Venice may account for the fact that his sacred music often seems more Renaissance than Baroque, though he was a contemporary of J.S. Bach.

One of Lotti's best-known compositions is a *Crucifixus* in which he aimed to break the rules of conventional harmony by using dissonance, "forbidden" intervals, and unconventional voice leading. Since it is primarily performed during Lent, the "painful" sounds seem almost atonal, but appropriate. *Miserere Mei, Deus* is also generally regarded as Lenten music, and embodies some of these same techniques, including frequent appearances of tone clusters and suspensions. The text is from the beginning of the Latin Vulgate Psalm 50 (KJV 51), one of the "penitential psalms" which forms a regular part of Jewish, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant liturgies.

At the center of our program we perform four of the five movements of our newly-commissioned work by prize-winning composer and pianist **Jonathan Kolm**. An Associate Professor of composition, music theory, and piano at Northern Virginia Community College's Annandale campus, he also maintains an active career as a performer and recitalist. His music has been widely performed across the United States and abroad and has won prizes and awards in many competitions.

Kolm is also active in environmental and social causes, and his passion for humanity is immediately evident when we consider the lyricists of some of his choral and vocal works — poets and

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writers such as Walt Whitman, Sara Teasdale, and Frances E.W. Harper. For the text of this crowd-sourced work, the members of the chorus and the community were asked to choose among three poems for each movement, thereby participating in the creation of the work they would be performing or hearing.

The first movement of *Refuge* is titled “Exile” and is based on the well-known poem, “The New Colossus” by Emma Lazarus. Many people who are familiar with the latter part of the poem are not aware of the beginning or even the title, until the familiar words finally appear: “Give me your tired, your poor...” The music is classic Kolm, combining “rhythmic intensity, haunting lyricism, and rich harmonic colors.” From the frequently changing meter of the introductory passages, the excitement builds until the piano pauses and the choir proclaims her name: “Mother of Exiles.”

The composer has these additional comments: “‘The New Colossus’ is a sonnet, a classical poetic form typically having an eight-line posing of a question, and then a six-line answer. The first section culminates in the “Mother of Exiles” phrase being repeated and brings that to a climax. The second part of the movement features an alto solo at first, then joined by a soprano solo supported by the chorus to set the cherished words of hope, acceptance, and welcoming in the second part of the text.”

Performed by Pro Coro Alexandria, the second movement, “Journey”, features a poem with a much longer title: “BEDS: N 10° 45’ 55” / E 78° 42’ 35”” by Divya Victor. Victor is a modern poet of some renown, many of whose poems relate to immigrant experiences and survival. Her poems have been described as “...meticulous, subversive, and razor-sharp...” and Kolm’s treatment of this poem could almost be described in the same words. Piano and singers begin by acting as percussion instruments that use words as well as wood or metal to underscore the lost feeling of separated families. Eventually the piano becomes a musical instrument again, and we discover that the human percussion can sing, beginning with the names for “Father” in several languages. The full text of the poem is finally revealed, becomes aleatoric, and finally fades away into silence.

Kolm’s description of how he chose to interpret this poem is fascinating, and explains why the words are positioned out of

order: “‘Beds’ is a contemporary poem and I had an extensive exchange including a Zoom chat with the author who took time to explain parts of the poem and her creative process in writing it. The six names are generic names for Father or Daddy in different Indian languages. There are three narrative voices; the left side are adult observations, the first phrase of the left side of the main stanzas are from children, and the rest of the right side stanzas are meta-narrative voices. The “it” is a reference to the clipping that the author heard from her neighbor’s garden shears when they spoke outside and refers to the idea of editing out something to fit in, changing an accent to fit in (clipping the tongue). The author encouraged me to alter the order of the words as I saw fit, and so the movement is in three parts which proceed in order of the narrative voices. First is the adult observations, all spoken/shouted with percussive sounds in the piano with woodblocks, a representation of the “pitch” being cut out of the music to represent how things in the text have been “clipped.” The middle section has pitch return with very simple rhythms to represent the child-like pleas of the children who are at the mercy of larger events happening around and to them. The final section contains the meta-narrative comments, now with rhythm having been largely stripped out, the more dissonant chords and tone clusters exist in a dark and foreboding atmosphere.”

The third movement, “Arrival,” uses the voices of people from Japan who have come to the United States and seem to be finding a place here. The texts are translations of senryu poems by three different poets. According to poetry teacher Billy Collins, the senryu is “a three-line Japanese poetic form that focuses on human nature, generally with an ironic or darkly comedic edge.” Like the more familiar haiku, the three lines generally consist of five, seven, and five syllables, but this is not a hard and fast rule, and the translator of these poems has not tried to make them fit that pattern. Kolm has set the first poem for sopranos, altos, and tenors only, *a cappella*. The mood of the poem is optimistic, the children happy. The second poem suggests the days of the internment camps during World War II, with the immigrant who has settled here and feels that America is home, protesting in the words of a song popular at the time, “Don’t Fence Me In.” The third is the music of a grandmother who seems well content with knowing that her

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descendents will be Americans, and that this will be her final resting place.

Kolm adds, “The three poems are by Japanese American immigrants during the era preceding and during World War II, the time of forced internment of both Japanese immigrants and American citizens of Japanese descent. The movement is in three sections, one for each poem. The first shows the pure innocence of children playing in the school yard. The middle poem has the tension of traveling to America with dreams, in conflict with the difficulty of arriving in a new place and struggling to find acceptance and a new home. The third poem has an echo of the opening choral texture with a different setting and the growing determination to make this new place home for future generations. The melody and harmony of this last part are entirely from a Japanese pentatonic scale (E-F-A-B-C).”

Kolm’s title of the fifth movement implies that “Refuge” has been achieved at last. (The poem, by Amanda Kay Williams, is entitled “Space.”) The first word of each stanza of the sparsely worded poem carries that meaning: Asylum, Haven, Refuge, and Sanctuary. Each is followed by a few words defining what might be found in a place with that name. For example, in the context of the poem, “Asylum” seems to refer to a place where one can be freed from unwelcome distractions and allow the mind to grow, and the word “Sanctuary” includes the image of protected wildlife as well as the more common religious meaning.

It is obvious from his comments that Kolm pays special attention to the structure as well as the meaning of the poetry. He remarks that, of the poems that were selected, “[this] is the most abstract in text, and I chose to think about each of the four-line stanzas, which have a consistent one word, three words, two words, one word structure, in relation to one another. Each of the four parts has its own section, and the text in this way proceeds linearly in the form of the piece. However, the relationship and music material develops and is transformed as it proceeds. The opening piano material of ‘Asylum’ and then ‘Find it’ is echoed in ‘My Country.’ There are other such echoes, and there are several uses of material from earlier movements, particularly the setting of ‘and her name’ from ‘Exile’ returns to find her place as a definite ‘Refuge.’ The

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final section lets the last word ‘Divine’ morph into finding ‘Refuge’ with the memory and knowledge of difficulties faced and overcome in the past, and hope for a better future.”

Other living creatures also need to feel safe and comforted. Noted American composer **Eric Whitacre** was contacted by a major film studio about the possibility of writing music for an animated film based on Rudyard Kipling’s *The Seal Lullaby*. The tale begins with a mother seal singing softly to her young pup. While the movie never came to fruition, Whitacre was inspired to write a choral work that so beautifully represents the tenderness that can be witnessed in mothers of all varieties.

Whitacre may be best known today for his work in creating “Virtual Choirs” during the Covid pandemic, which have united more than 100,000 singers from more than 145 countries. A graduate of the Juilliard School of Music, he is currently Visiting Composer at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and Artist in Residence with the Los Angeles Master Chorale.

**Sarah Quartel** is a Canadian composer and educator known for her fresh and exciting approach to choral music. She celebrates the musical potential of all learners by providing singers access to high quality repertoire and engaging musical education. Ms. Quartel’s choral works are performed by children, youth, and adults throughout the world and her work as an educator connects exciting musical experiences with meaningful classroom learning.

Ms. Quartel wrote both words and music for *Sing, My Child*, a multi-rhythmic tune accompanied by a hand drum. She provides directions to singers: “Light and dancing” for the first few verses; then comes a section marked “Strong, like a hymn.” Each of the verses speaks of a part of the day — morning, midday, evening, night — while the hymn-like refrain is an instruction for coping with life.

We return to the Ukrainian settlements in western Canada for another of the “songs of homesickness” collected there. Characteristic of this type of song is the frequent occurrence of the word for “foreign land.”

Composer and educator **Mark Burrows** is known for his humorous choral works for children, but *These Things Shall Never Die* is proof that he can also write serious music for adults — in this case, a setting of a poem by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century

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novelist Charles Dickens, commissioned by a men's choir in 2018. The poem's hymn-like meter of 8,6,8,6 seems to call for a more traditional style of music, but if you listen carefully, you will realize that the music has its own kind of 21<sup>st</sup>-century identity, as Burrows plays with the different vocal qualities of each of the four parts.

A native of Virginia, **Marques L.A. Garrett** is an Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He holds a PhD in Music Education from Florida University. He has been praised for his research in choral repertoire, and his compositions and arrangements are widely published and performed. The text for *My heart be brave* is a poem by James Weldon Johnson, writer and civil rights activist in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, who is perhaps best known for the lyrics of *Lift Every Voice and Sing*.

Our program closes with *Hope for Resolution*, subtitled "A Song for Mandela and deKlerk." In the words of composers **Paul Caldwell** and **Sean Ivory**, "In its juxtaposition of a European chant melody and an anti-apartheid song from South Africa, this piece is a celebration of diversity. The arrangement reflects our respect for divergent musical styles and points us toward our innate (though sometimes neglected) potential for peaceful coexistence."

This work embodies commitment to the ideals of peace and compassion. The composers began arranging music together spontaneously in the early 1990s and have worked together ever since. Caldwell is Artistic Director of the Seattle Men's and Women's Choruses. Ivory directs the Grand Rapids (MI) Symphony Youth Chorus, and is on the faculty of Calvin College. Their commitment to music relating to social justice is evident in the fact that they have suggested how *Hope for Resolution* can be performed by any size ensemble, from two-part treble chorus to large festival choir.

The piece opens with the hymn "Of the Father's Love Begotten," sung by a treble choir which begins in unison and then breaks into three parts to sing the second and third verses as a canon, with a piano interlude in between. This is followed by the full choir singing the South African freedom song in the Zulu language; after another piano interlude, they are joined by a soprano reprise of the first verse of the hymn, and for the grand finale, a treble semi-chorus. It provides a fitting close to

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this concert, which includes so many reminders of the need for commitment to justice, courage, compassion, and community.

*Mimi Stevens*

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## SINGERS

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### SOPRANO

Jocelyn Bravo  
Cienna Breen \*  
Samantha Calkins  
Dot Dannenberg  
Jenna Dawkins \*  
Monique Doussard \*  
Diane Erbland  
Jacquelynne Fontaine \*  
Rasneek Gujral \*  
Kayley Hannan  
Catherine Harsono  
Carolyn Jackson  
Mary Lehrer  
Katie McCoy  
Margaret McLaughlin  
Karen Minatelli \*  
Brittany Morgan  
Meghan Nevola  
Ellienne Noonan  
Mandi Pratt-Chapman  
Andrea Steinacker  
Nicole Thomson

### TENOR

Johnny Beasley \*  
James Martin  
Alan Morris  
Gary Roznovsky  
Brent Schultheis  
Mimi Stevens  
Troy Tanner  
Carl Zoolkoski

### ALTO

Bridget Baker-White \*  
Trudy Beddow  
Esaiteberhane "Ready" Berehe  
Anne Buckborough  
Patricia Burson  
Kaitlin Costello  
Alison Fitzgerald \*  
Rebecca Grisso  
Peggy Heiser  
Kara Kozikowski  
Marion Lange  
Kristina Meacham  
Erin Riley \*  
Anne Simpson  
Clarice Snyder  
Erin Sutherland  
KC Sykora  
Stacy Tanner  
Melissa Veneracion \*  
Allison Wickens

### BASS

Michael Bianco \*  
Zachary Byers \*  
Clifford Gay \*  
Joshua Heit  
Terry Langendoen  
David Pritzker \*  
Vell Rives  
Kevin Simpson \*  
Richard Simpson \*  
Ian Stout



**Brian J. Isaac** is honored to serve as the Artistic Director of the Alexandria Choral Society (Alexandria, Va.). He is also the Artistic Director of Encore Creativity for Older Adults (Annapolis, Md.), the nation's largest nonprofit choral arts organization for older adults, and the Founder/Artistic Director of Church Circle Singers (Annapolis, Md.).

Mr. Isaac was most recently the Managing Director for Arts Laureate, a recording team which delivered over 1,500 virtual performances across the country during the Covid-19 pandemic. Previous appointments include: Artistic Director of the Williamsburg Choral Guild (Williamsburg, Va.), music faculty at Encore University, Interim Director of Choral Music at Thomas Nelson Community College (Hampton, Va.), adjunct music faculty at Tidewater Community College (Portsmouth, Va.) and Old Dominion University (Norfolk, Va.), Assistant Conductor with the Washington Master Chorale (Washington, D.C.), and Director of Choirs at Damascus High School (Damascus, Md.).

Mr. Isaac's professional and community ensembles have commissioned and premiered new works by composers such as Tawnie Olson, Lori Laitman, Christopher Hoh, Jonathan Kolm, and Ola Gjeilo. Reviews include: "perfectly brilliant" (composer Dr. William Averitt, Shenandoah Conservatory) and having "fine balance" and "delivering sounds that ranged from sensitively soft to knock your socks off soaring" (*The Virginia Gazette*).

Mr. Isaac holds a Master of Music in music education from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University and a Bachelor of Music Education from Old Dominion University. A former Marine, Mr. Isaac also holds a Bachelor of Science in English from the United States Naval Academy.



Described as “brilliant” by *The Pittsburgh Tribune*, pianist **Wei-Han Wu** has performed in venues such as the Chicago Cultural Center, the Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall, and the DiMenna Center for Performing Arts (New York City). Committed to the performance and promotion of new music, Mr. Wu served as pianist for the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble (ACE) and is currently a member of the [Switch-Ensemble], an ensemble dedicated to the performance of electroacoustic music. Mr. Wu was recently featured as pianist with the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and was a guest soloist at the Third Practice Festival at the University of Richmond, as well as at the 2017 New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival (NYCEMF). He has worked with composers such as John Adams, Lee Hyla, Steven Stucky, Osvaldo Golijov, Eric Wubbels, and John Harbison.

As a vocal coach and accompanist, Mr. Wu has worked with artists such as Vinson Cole, Susanne Mentzer, and Nancy Gustafson. In 2009 he was a participant in the first Castleton Music Festival, by invitation of Maestro Lorin Maazel, to prepare the production of Benjamin Britten’s *Beggar’s Opera*. In 2012–13 he was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, where he worked closely with the vocal arts program. Most recently, Mr. Wu was guest music director at the University of Alabama and the University of Colorado at Boulder, working with students for their opera productions.

A member of Pi Kappa Lambda, Mr. Wu received his Bachelor’s degree from Northwestern University and Master’s degrees from both the University of Michigan and Northwestern. He is the recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Juilliard School, the Felicia Montealgre Fellowship from the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Collaborative Piano Fellowship from Bard College. He is the recipient of a double D.M.A. degree from the Eastman School of Music, where he served as president of OSSIA New Music and performs with the Musica Nova Ensemble.



The music of **Jonathan Kolm** has been performed across the United States and abroad. His works combine rhythmic intensity, haunting lyricism, and rich harmonic colors and has been called “fluent in its diversity” (Mark Kanny, *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*) and “deeply moving” (*Classical Music Today*). His music has won prizes and awards in many competitions including The American Prize, the Swan Prize in Music Composition, the Percussive Arts Society Composition Competition, the National Federation of Music Clubs Competition, Voices of Change Composition, and the Austin Peay State Composition Competition, as well as many others. His music has been supported by such organizations as the National Endowment for the Arts and the Wolfrap Foundation and he has been commissioned by a wide range of artists and ensembles. His music has been heard at such festivals as June in Buffalo, highSCORE, Beijing International Composition Workshop, MUSICX, and the Ernest Bloch Festival. He has had artist colony residencies at Ipark (Conn.), Brush Creek Ranch Arts Center (Wyo.), the Kimmel Nelson Harding Center (Neb.), and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. His choral music has been performed by some of the leading choirs in the United States, including the New York Virtuoso Singers, VocalEssence, the Princeton Singers, and the Young New Yorkers’ Chorus, and his work for men’s chorus, *Songs for the People*, was performed at Lincoln Center (Alice Tully Hall) by the University of Michigan Men’s Chorus. He maintains an active performing career in new music and has appeared in recitals at many colleges and universities across the United States. In addition to his work as a composer and pianist, he teaches composition, piano, and music theory at Northern Virginia Community College, where he serves as Associate Professor and advocates for various environmental and social causes in the nation’s capital.



**Samantha Hegre** began her cello studies at the age of eight in Sacramento, Calif. She later earned a Bachelor of Music degree from California State University Sacramento where she studied with Andrew Luchansky. She then went on to complete a Master of Music in Baltimore, Md., studying with Jeffrey Solow, Alan Stepanyk, and David Hardy.

Ms. Hegre has performed in Italy, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and England, as well as in the U.S., including performances at the Kennedy Center and Wolf Trap. She attended Kneisel Hall Chamber Music School and Festival in Blue Hill, Maine, and has played in cello and chamber music master classes with Steven Doane, Mihaly Virizlay, Ronald Copes (of the Juilliard Quartet), the Alexander Quartet, and Seymour Lipkin. She has been a member of indie folk bands The Last Monarchs and The Echo Wall, as well as performing with alt-folk artist Zoe Ravenwood.

An active performer in the Washington, D.C., area, Ms. Hegre teaches privately and with Fairfax County Public Schools. She lives in Alexandria with her partner Ravi and when not teaching or performing, can be found cooking, gardening, and being an over-the-top cat mom to kitties Boris and Thelonious Monk.

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**Michael Barranco** currently resides in Fairfax, Va., as a multifaceted musician, active in the fields of performance, education, and instrument repair. Dr. Barranco just completed his DMA studies at George Mason University and holds the titles of Graduate Lecturer and Graduate Peer Advisor, leading world music courses, coaching percussion ensemble, and assisting graduate students with their imperative needs. At Cameron Elementary School, Dr. Barranco teaches K-6 general music, leading a new generation of musicians with song, movement, and percussion. As a performer, he holds the positions of principal percussionist with the American Festival Pops Orchestra and Washington Balalaika Orchestra. Dr. Barranco's current research focuses of the timbral qualities of acoustic

## 20 ABOUT THE ARTISTS

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percussion instruments and his percussion studies are led by John Spirtas of the Washington National Opera. Dr. Barranco is endorsed by Artifact Percussion.

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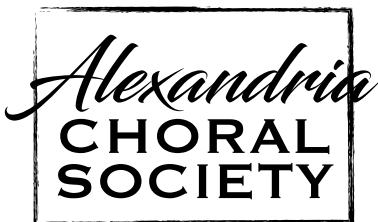
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