



LUX

THE DAWN FROM ON HIGH

WITH THE WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2022 | 7:30PM
GEORGE WASHINGTON MASONIC MEMORIAL, ALEXANDRIA

LUX

THE DAWN FROM ON HIGH

BRIAN J. ISAAC
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA
DAVID WEIGERT, DIRECTOR

WEI-HAN WU
ORGAN

NADIA PESSOA
HARP

LUX: THE DAWN FROM ON HIGH

DAN FORREST (b. 1978)

Jacquelynn Fontaine, *soprano* | Johnny Beasley, *tenor*

I. ILLUMINARE

Per viscera misericordiae
Dei nostri
in quibus visitavit
nos oriens ex alto
illuminare his qui in tenebris
et in umbra mortis sedent
ad dirigendos pedes nostros
in viam pacis.
Lux ex alto,
veni nos illuminare.

based on Luke 1:78–79

Lux de luce apparuisti Christe,
cui Magi munera offerunt,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.
Antiphon for Epiphany, 14th century

By the mercy of our God
the dawn from on high
will break upon us,
to give light to those
who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet
into the way of peace.
Light from on high,
come illumine us.

You appeared as Light from light,
O Christ, to whom the Magi offered gifts,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

II. LUX IN TENEBRIS

Lux fulgebit hodie super nos,
quia natus est nobis Dominus.
Introit for Christmas Dawn, 10th century

Lux in tenebris lucet
et tenebrae eam non superaverunt.
John 1:5

A light will shine on us today,
for the Lord is born unto us.

The light shines in darkness;
and the darkness has not overcome it.

III. THE SUN NEVER SAYS

Even
After
All this time
The sun never says to the earth,
“You owe
Me.”

Look
What happens
With a love like that,
It lights the
Whole
Sky.

Daniel Ladinsky (b. 1948), from The Gift

IV. GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax.
from Luke 2:14

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth, peace.

V. CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT

Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people's everlasting Light,
O Christ, Thou Savior of us all,
now hear Thy servants when we call. Amen.

Creator alme siderum
aeterna lux credentium,
Christe redemptor omnium
exaudi voces supplicum.

O Blest Creator of the light,
who made the day with radiance bright,
and o'er the newborn world did call
the light from darkness first of all.

To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
laud, honor, might, and glory be
from age to age, eternally. Amen.

... It lights the Whole Sky...

Although composer **Dan Forrest** had been active in music in one way or another since starting piano lessons at the age of eight (including winning awards in high school, earning a Bachelor and Master of Music in piano performance at Bob Jones University and a Doctorate of Musical Arts in composition from the University of Kansas, teaching composition at both of these universities, and winning the ASCAP Morton Gould Award for Young Composers in 2006), he may be said to have achieved public renown with the premiere performance of his “Arise, Shine” at Carnegie Hall in 2007. His first large commissioned choral work, *Requiem for the Living*, was premiered in 2013. This was followed by *Jubilate Deo* for children’s choir in 2016 and this evening’s featured work, *LUX: The Dawn From On High* in 2018. His latest major choral work, *the breath of life*, was premiered in October 2019.

Forrest has been a prolific composer in other genres as well, including anthems and hymns for church and community choirs, and instrumental works for wind ensemble and solo instruments. He is also active in music publishing, teaching, and mentoring other composers.

LUX: The Dawn From On High, is written in five movements and has an arch-like structure, with similarities between the first (“Illuminare”) and fifth (“Creator of the Stars of Night”), the second (“Lux in Tenebris”) and fourth (“Gloria in Excelsis”), and something completely different (“The Sun Never Says”) in the center. The uniting elements between the first and fifth movements are two: the inclusion of soprano and tenor soloists and the use of a chant-like melodic structure. In fact, the chant in the fifth movement, heard in both English and Latin, uses an actual 7th-century chant as the main melody. The second and fourth movements have more rhythmic intensity and a joyous exuberance. All of these use ancient texts, both Biblical and liturgical, and the orchestral parts are omnipresent.

In contrast, the lyrics of “The Sun Never Says” are from a poem which has a copyright date of 1999. The mood is thoughtful, and the accompaniment is minimal. Those who are aware of Forrest’s deep Christian faith may be tempted to wonder whether to a listener the “Sun” might be translated into the “Son,” since all the other movements mention something related to Christmas. The first includes a reference to the Magi, the second begins with a 10th-century Introit for Christmas Dawn, the fourth is part of the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke, and the fifth includes a choice between two verses (of the many that exits) of the chant in English, one of which relates to the birth of the Christ child. For this almost-springtime performance, we are using the other one, which refers to the story of the Creation. The final verse, appropriately, is a “Gloria Patri.”

Forrest’s compositional style is very much of the present, with unexpected changes of meter and harmony, and a wide range of sounds and sonorities in the orchestra. He is known for his skill in writing melodic lines for all voices and instruments, and for his attention to the sounds, rhythms, and meanings of the words he chooses to set to music. He could be described as a painter whose palette, canvas, and brushes are sounds, creating visual images with instruments and voices. The result is an unforgettable experience or both listeners and performers.

Mimi Stevens

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Founded in 1970, the **Alexandria Choral Society** aspires to enhance the cultural life of the city of Alexandria and surrounding communities by presenting diverse and 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 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.).

Brian 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.).

Brian'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*).

Brian 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, Brian 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.



Nadia Pessoa is an award-winning harpist whose career has taken her to stages across North America, Europe, Brazil, and China. She regularly performs with The Washington Ballet, the Alexandria Symphony, the Alexandria Choral Society, the Children's Chorus of Washington, and other local ensembles, and has been a featured performer at many of Washington's most notable events, including the Meridian Ball, State Department receptions, concerts at the Washington National Cathedral, and Christmas at The White House.

Nadia is a graduate of Indiana University and the University of Michigan, with additional studies in Vienna, Austria. She has appeared as a soloist at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and on the National Mall, and serves in the U.S. Army.

The **Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra** is one of the region's premiere youth orchestras and an orchestral training program for advanced level musicians who desire to perform some of the greatest symphonic works ever written. WMYO is also open to highly exceptional middle school students who have a long history with a private teacher.

A typical concert season may include works by Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Debussy, Beethoven, Stravinsky, Dvořák, and Ravel. WMYO also tackles works by Mahler, Berlioz, Brahms, Rachmaninov, and Bartók. WMYO offers a unique, friendly, and supportive environment in which our area's youth learns the art of great orchestral performing and musical leadership. In particular, our Orchestra offers its seniors the opportunity to perform as concerto soloists.



Currently Music Director of the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, **David Weigert** received his undergraduate degree from the Eastman School of Music and is trained as a clarinetist, violinist, and pianist. He has performed with numerous collegiate and professional ensembles on both clarinet and violin, including the Eastman Philharmonia, Baylor Symphony, Greece Symphony, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, and Pasadena Philharmonic. Weigert has also conducted several ensembles including the Jacobs School of Music Philharmonic Orchestra, Round Rock Symphony, Richland College Orchestra, Baylor Symphony, Miami Music Festival Orchestra, and UNT Symphony Orchestra.

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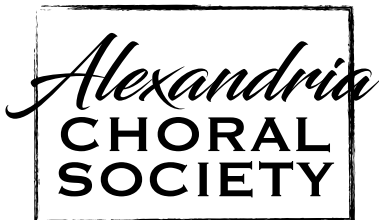
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