



The Beauty of the Earth

April 2022

Ryan Phillips, *Conductor*
 Woan Ching Lim, *Pianist*

Emerald Stream.....*Seth Houston* (b. 1974)

Earth Song.....*Frank Ticheli* (b.1958)

Yver, vous n’êtes qu’un villain.....*Claude Debussy* (1862-1918)

Translation:

*Yver, vous n’êtes qu’un villain;
 Esté est plaisant et gentil,
 En témoin de may et d’avril
 Qui l’accompaignent soir et main.*

Winter, you are nothing but a villain;
 Summer is pleasant and gentle,
 As confirmed by May and April,
 Who escort it evening and morning.

*Esté revest champs, bois et fleurs,
 De sa livrée de verdure
 Et de maintes autres couleurs,
 Par l’ordonnance de nature.*

Summer clothes the fields, woods and flowers
 With its garb of greenery,
 And many other colors,
 According to the laws of nature.

*Mais vous, Yver, trop estes plain
 De nège, vent, pluie et grézil;
 On vous deust banir en exil.
 Sans point flater, je parle plein.
 Yver, vous n’êtes qu’un villain;*

But you, Winter, are much too full
 Of snow, wind, rain and hail.
 You should be banished into exile.
 Without mincing words, I’ll speak plainly:
 Winter, you are nothing but a villain!

Sing of Spring.....*George Gershwin (1898-1937)*

As Torrents in Summer.....*Edward Elgar (1857-1934)*

Rest.....*Ralph Vaughan William (1872-1958)*

Great Flowing River.....*James Eakin III*

Erika Rush, Violin
Katherine Capp, Cello

Homeland.....*Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)*

————— **INTERMISSION** —————

For the Beauty of the Earth.....*John Rutter (b. 1945)*

Linden Lea.....*Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)*

Metsa Telegramm.....*Uno Naissoo (1928-1980)*

Tok, tok, tok, rähn see telegramme toksib.

Tok, tok, tok, Ärge murdke puude oksil!

Tok, tok, tok, üle metsa keset vaikust

Tok, tok, tok, rähni teade kõikjal kaigub.

*Hoidke ilu, metsa elu! Olgu teile sõbraks
ju siin iga puu!
Ja kaitskem metsa kaunist rüüüd.*

*Siis mets meil mühab alati.
Ka linnupesi kaitske pesi nüi,
et kajaks rõõmus linnu hüüüd.*

Translation:

Tok, tok, tom the woodpecker he
telegrams knocks

Tok, tok, tok don't break the trees'
branches

Tok, tok, tok above the forest amidst
the silence.

Tok, tok, tok woodpeckers' message
everywhere are echoing.

Preserve beauty forest life!
be your friend already here every tree!
And let's protect the forest's beautiful
garment.

Then the forest for us murmurs always.
That bird's nests protects nests,
So that would echo joyful birds' call.

Animal Crackers Vol. 2.....*Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)*

Bumble Bee.....*Anders Edenroth (b. 1963)*

Ndikhokhele Bawo.....*arr. Michael Barrett*

Ndikhokhele Bawo

*Ndikhokhele Mmeli wami
Zalomblaba Bawo
Bawo ndiya bong'a ngoba wena
Usandi gcinile.*

Translation:

He paid for me (by dying on the cross),
my Father

He paid for me by representing me
While on earth, my Father
Father I thank you because you
Will always keep me (safe).

Conductor's Corner

– Ryan Phillips, M.M., *Music Director and Conductor*

The Beauty of the Earth

April 2022

Throughout my adult years, I have always tried to do better in many aspects of my life, whether that is being a better musician, an encouraging teacher, a loving husband, or a more involved father. In all of these cases, being present and showing love, kindness, and gratitude is what betters ourselves. Because it emboldens love and kindness, gratitude is always my number one takeaway. Let me ask you: How do you show gratitude toward others? Your community and country? How about your planet?

Our planet has housed life for billions of years, yet the human race has managed to alter the environment so drastically through energy and manufacturing emissions, that it might not be suitable for life within the next few lifetimes. How can this have happened? We show gratitude for so many things in our lives, but do we show it for our planet? We have a duty to do all that we can to preserve our planet; buy used, drive electric, run solar power, conserve resources, etc.

This program is the Arizona Repertory Singers' small contribution to raise awareness of our responsibilities related to climate change. Each piece speaks directly to the predicament in which we have found ourselves, the animals that we have affected, or the home for which we must rededicate ourselves and our service. Through this music, we hope you find the motivation, and make the effort to save your home, our home, and the home of our future generations.

Program Notes

Emerald Stream – Seth Houston (b. 1974)

At the age of 17, composer Seth Houston went on a month-long canoe trip in northern Canada with his father. The beautiful outdoors and continuous rhythm of the paddle gave Houston the inspiration for this piece, and he immediately began working on what would become this shape-note-inspired environmental outcry. Early American shape-note singing was a tradition that inspired amateur singers, with its strong sound, open chords, and imitative tendencies. Unlike the majority of the choral repertory, *Emerald Stream* gives the melody to the basses for the much of the piece.

Earth Song – Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

The original instrumental intention for *Earth Song* was not for choir, but for wind ensemble, and originally appeared in a larger work called *Sanctuary*. As Ticheli continued work on the project, he thought, “This music is just begging to be sung by a chorus.” The composer wrote the poetry as a “cry and a prayer for peace” at a time when he felt exhausted by the war in Iraq. For Ticheli, this poetry is meant to calm and provide refuge in times of pain and strife. He believes that music, no matter the instrumentation, provides a safe and peaceful place when the weight of life seems too much to bear.

Yver, vous n'êtes qu'un villain – Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

Composed in 1908, this is the third song in Debussy's set *Trois Chansons*. The text comes from medieval poet Charles d'Orleans, during his 25-year imprisonment by the English after the Battle of Agincourt. The poetry vilifies winter, which is "full of snow, wind, rain, and sleet," and makes comparisons to the summer, which is "pleasant and kind." Debussy sets this text with segmented music, each with its own characteristics. Sequences of rapid melodic descents depict the frigid wind and bitter cold, accompanied by chromaticism that delivers French-augmented-sixth chords with a harmonic bite. To differentiate between the two seasons, Debussy employs a quartet to deliver the purity of spring against the articulated and dissonant choir of winter.

Sing of Spring – George Gershwin (1898-1937)

In the last few years of George Gershwin's life, he composed for a few Hollywood movies. "Sing of Spring" was originally composed for *A Damsel in Distress* (1937). Because the movie is set in an English castle, Gershwin chose to set the piece in the style of an English madrigal, full of onomatopoeia to represent bird calls and sounds of spring. True to his American jazz background, the song is filled with various ornamentations and chromaticism, with use of triplets to guide the joyous and magical feeling of spring. Interestingly, the composer employs the use of harmonized stepwise ascending and descending lines throughout the entire work, perhaps to offer the feeling of flight and weightlessness of chirping birds in spring.

As Torrents in Summer – Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Edward Elgar's "As Torrents in Summer" is taken from his 1896 cantata *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*, composed for the North Staffordshire Music Festival. An adaptation of Longfellow's *The Saga of King Olaf*, the text speaks of Olaf Tryggvason, the man credited for bringing Christianity to Norway. The text of this *a cappella* chorus uses analogy to accentuate God's love for us all—just as one cannot see far off rains that make nearby rivers flow, so is the love that cannot be seen given to all. The piece is written in two sections, with each part of the analogy utilizing the same music with different text. This compositional technique also enforces the parallels made in the analogy.

Rest – Ralph Vaughan William (1872-1958)

English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams first began music lessons with his aunt after moving into his grandparent's house following the death of his father. His path would eventually lead to the Royal College of Music in London where he studied with Perry, Stanford, and Wood, and became good friends with Gustav Holst. At the turn of the century, Vaughan Williams composed *Rest*, an *a cappella* choral work with text by Christina Rossetti. This sonnet enlightens death and describes it in such a way that brings peace and clarity to our mortality. Vaughan Williams takes the listener on a journey filled with drastic dynamic alterations, unexpected harmonic changes, and deliberate silence, all guided by his interpretation of the text.

Great Flowing River – James Eakin III

James Eakin III called upon Charles Anthony Silvestri to write the lyric for *Great Flowing River* after learning about the death of a loved one. In the summer of 2020, Eakin wrote, “Now in the midst of a pandemic, many have lost someone close to them. May this bring you comfort and stand as a tribute to the power of a lingering spirit, even through incredible loss.” Set for strings, tenor soloist, and choir, Eakin offers a pure sense of serenity in our darkest times. This piece glorifies the life that each of us has led and guides us to “the great flowing river of truth.”

Homeland – Z. Randall Stroope (b. 1953)

Gustav Holst’s “Jupiter” melody from *The Planets* serves as Stroope’s main theme for his nationalistic triumph, *Homeland*. At the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana in 1981, a hymn arrangement of this song was sung for the joyous occasion, and was performed once again at her funeral at the request of her sons. Stroope looked to Sir Cecil Spring-Rice’s poetry in Holst’s 1921 patriotic hymn *I Vow to Thee, My Country* for inspiration as he utilized its first verse while newly composing two subsequent verses for *Homeland*. These additional verses devote admiration to his father who walked the Bataan Death March in World War II; a forced 65-mile march for 60,000 to 80,000 American and Filipino prisoners by the Imperial Japanese Army in 1942. With the help of Holst’s lush and emotionally charged melody, this heartfelt piece captivates the listener and elicits an abundance of national pride.

For the Beauty of the Earth – John Rutter (b. 1945)

John Rutter's *For the Beauty of the Earth* is essential repertoire in the world of sacred music. This anthem of praise sets four of the original eight stanzas of text from Folliott S. Pierpoint's 1864 hymn bearing the same name. Rutter's composition was first written in 1978 and was dedicated partly to the Texas Choral Director's Association. Each verse is structurally the same in its strophic manner, though variance is created through a passing of the melody to different voices during each verse. Rutter composes each verse differently with varied textures and harmonies, as well as a counter melody in the third stanza.

Linden Lea – Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Composed in the same year as *Rest*, *Linden Lea* (1902) uses text from English writer William Barnes' poem "My Orcha'd in Linden Lea." One trait of Barnes' writing was his fondness of alliterative phrases, one of which can be found in *Linden Lea*; "Do lean down low in Linden Lea." Vaughan Williams originally set this pastoral text for solo vocalist and piano, though our arrangement is from English art song composer Arthur Somervell (1863-1937). The original composition is a strophic setting, where the vocal melody does not change, but text cycles through various verses. Somervell's arrangement takes the listener through the same three stanzas of text, but offers Vaughan Williams' melody to various choral sections to help create interest throughout the work.

Metsa Telegramm – Uno Naissoo (1928-1980)

This upbeat Estonian piece, “The Woodpecker’s Warning,” depicts the urgency of environmental protection from the woodpecker’s point of view. Ira Lember’s text reminds us that forests are a “garment” that blankets the world, and a home to the “joyful bird’s call.” Naissoo’s composition paints the texts, as the repeated “tok” and woodblock accents illustrate the knocking of the woodpecker. Similarly, his playful “doom-chuck” accompaniment brings the lighthearted attitude of the animal, without discounting the necessary environmental plea.

Animal Crackers Vol. 2 – Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)

Twentieth-century American poet Ogden Nash (1901-1971) holds the title of “best-known producer of humorous poetry” by *The New York Times*, and wrote over 500 short pieces in this genre. This work is Eric Whitacre’s second set of choral pieces meant to bring levity to the concert hall. Though this volume contains three short songs, Whitacre writes, “feel free to mix and match pieces between volumes to create your very own personalized zoo.” The three pieces in this collection: “The Canary,” “The Eel,” and “The Kangaroo” each have their own exquisite sense of humor that delights singers and audiences alike.

Bumble Bee – Anders Edenroth (b. 1963)

At the beginning of 2022, after 37 years singing tenor in Sweden’s vocal jazz ensemble *The Real Group*, Anders Edenroth left the group to pursue other interests. Edenroth’s composition, *Bumble Bee*, was a signature song for the group and has been performed worldwide. In true contemporary *a cappella* fashion, this song features a single melody with all other voices on neutral syllables to create the accompaniment. Edenroth passes the melody to various sections in the ensemble to bring out textural interest. He also changes keys an extraordinary ten times! Imagine the flight of a small bee as you hear these changes and as the various vocal lines weave in and out of one another.

Ndikhokhele Bawo – arr. Michael Barrett

The text of *Ndikhokhele Bawo* comes from Psalm 23, “The Lord is my Shepherd,” and is in the Xhosa language. This Bantu language falls into the category of Nguni languages, the same umbrella that contains Zulu; Xhosa is one of the most widely spoken languages in South Africa. Michael Barrett, Director of Choral Music Studies at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, sets this sacred text in a large-scale ternary (ABA) form. A solo soprano voice brings in the choir with a serene sense of hope and wonder. The women join in with the same soloistic style and the men accompany them in widely voiced homophony. The piece continues to grow in dynamics with a celebratory declaration.

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