

For the Joy of Song: Texts and Translations

Tomorrow Shall Be My Dancing Day

Text: Traditional

Selected by Lee Wright

1. Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
To call my true love to my dance;

Refrain:

*Sing, oh! my love, oh! my love, my love, my
love,
This have I done for my true love.*

2. Then was I born of a virgin pure,
Of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
To call my true love to my dance.

3. In a manger laid, and wrapped I was
So very poor, this was my chance
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass
To call my true love to my dance.

4. Then afterwards baptized I was;
The Holy Ghost on me did glance,
My Father's voice heard I from above,
To call my true love to my dance.

Bogoroditse Devo

Text: Christian Prayer, Luke 1:28, 42

Selected by Becci Miller

Bogoroditse Devo, raduisya,
Blagodatnaya Mariye, Gospod s Toboyu.
Blagoslovenna Ty v zhenakh,
i blagosloven plod chreva Tvoyego,
yako Spasa rodila esi dush nashikh

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
Mary full of grace, the Lord is with Thee.
Blessed art Thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb,
for Thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.

Dixit Maria

Text: after Luke 1:38

Selected by Marrlee Burgess

Dixit Maria ad angelum:
Ecce ancilla Domini,
fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum

Mary said to the Angel:
Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord,
let it be done to me, according to your word.

Es Ist Ein Ros Entsprungen
Text: Anonymous Medieval
Selected by: Andrea McGaugh

Strophe 1

Es ist ein Ros entsprungen
aus einer Wurzel zart,
als uns die Alten sangen,
von Jesse kam die Art,
und hat ein Blümlein bracht,
mitten im kalten Winter
wohl zu der halben Nacht.

Strophe 4

Lob, Ehr sei Gott, dem Vater,
Sohn und Heiligen Geist
Maria, Gottes Mutter
dein Hilf an uns beweis
und bitt dein liebes Kind,
dass es uns wohl behüten,
verzeihen unser Sünd

Strophe 5

So singen wir all Amen das heisst:
nun werd es wahr,
was wir begehnen all samen.
O Jesu, hilf uns dar in deines Vaters Reich,
drin wollen wir dich loben.
O Gott, uns das verleih.

O Magnum Mysterium

**Text: Responsorial Chant from the
Christmas Matins**

Selected by: Kathryn Borden and Jason Cloen

O magnum mysterium et admirabile sacramentum,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum
jacentem in praesepe.

O beata Virgo,
cuius viscera meruerunt portare Dominum
Jesus Christum. Alleluia

Verse 1

A rose has sprung up from a tender branch,
as the ancient ones sang,
its origin from Jesse;
and it brought forth a little blossom in the
middle of the cold winter,
Even in the middle of the night.

Verse 4

Praise, honor to God the Father,
To the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Mary, Mother of God,
Manifest your willingness to help us,
and entreat your beloved child,
that he watch over us and forgive us of our sin.

Verse 5.

So sing we all Amen, which means: that
which we all long for will now come true.
O Jesus, help us enter into your Father's
kingdom, where we want to praise you.
O God, grant us our wish.

O great mystery and wonderful sacrament,
that beasts should see the new-born Lord
lying in a manger.

O blessed virgin, whose body was worthy to
bear the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia

Walk Together, Children
Text: American Negro Spiritual
Selected by: Brenda Tremblay

Walk together children.
Don't you get weary.
There's a great camp meeting in the
Promised Land.
I'm gonna walk/sing/shout
and never tire.

Psalm 23
Text: Psalm 23, adapt. Bobby McFerrin
Selected by Tansy Deutsch

The Lord is my shepherd;
I have all I need.
She makes me lie down in green meadows;
beside the still waters she will lead.

She restores my soul; She rights my wrongs.
She leads me in a path of good things
and fills my heart with songs.

Even though I walk through a dark and dreary land
there is nothing that can shake me;
She has said she won't forsake me:
I'm in Her hand.

She sets a table before me
in the presence of my foes;
She anoints my head with oil,
and my cup overflows.

Surely, surely goodness and kindness
will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will live in Her house forever,
forever and ever.

Glory be to our Mother, and Daughter,
and to the holy of holies;
as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

How Can I Keep From Singing?
Text: 19th century Revival hymn
Selected by: Lee Wright

My life goes on in endless song
Above earth's lamentation,
I hear the clear, though far-off hymn
That hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing,
It sounds an echo in my soul.
How can I keep from singing?

While through the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth;
And though the darkness 'round me close,
Songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm,
While to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of heaven and earth
How can I keep from singing?

The Lake Isle of Innisfree
Text: W.B. Yeats, (1865-1939)
Selected by: Debra McCullough

I will arise and go now,
and go to Innisfree,
And, a small cabin build there,
of clay and wattles made;
Nine bean rows will I have there,
a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone,
alone in the bee-loud glade.
And, I shall have some peace there,
for peace comes dropping slow,
Dropping from the veils of the morning
to where the cricket sings;
There midnight's all aglimmer,
and noon a purple glow,
And evening full of the linnet's wings.
I will arise and go now,
for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by
the shore; While I stand on the roadway,
or on the pavements grey,
I hear it in the heart, the heart's core
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Even When He is Silent

**Text: Unknown Jewish, found scratched
onto a cellar wall in a concentration camp
in Cologne, Germany.**

Selected by: Jeffrey Thompson

I believe in the sun
even when it is not shining
And I believe in love,
even when there's no one there.
And I believe in God,
even when He is silent.

Salmo 150

Text: Psalm 150

Selected by: Laura Anderson

Laudate Dominum in sanctis ejus:
Laudate eum in firmamento virtutis ejus.
Laudate eum in virtutibus ejus:
Laudate eum secundum
multitudinem magnitudinis ejus.
Laudate eum in sono tubae:
Laudate eum in psalterio et cithara.
Laudate eum in tympani et choro:
Laudate eum in chordis et organo.
Laudate eum in cymbalis benesonantibus:
Laudate eum in cymbalis jubilationis:
omnis spiritus laudet Dominum.

Praise the Lord in his sacred places,
praise him in the firmament of his power.
Praise him for his mighty acts,
praise him according to his excellent greatness.
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet,
praise him with the psaltery and the harp.
Praise him with the timbrel and the dance,
praise him with strings and pipes.
Praise him with high-sounding cymbals,
praise him with cymbals of joy.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

Alleluia

Text: Saint Augustine (354-430)

Selected by: Lee Wright

Alleluia, All shall be Amen
We shall rest and we shall see,
We shall see and we shall know,
We shall know and we shall love,
Behold our end which is no end,
Alleluia
All shall be Amen!

Seek him that maketh the seven stars

Text: Amos 5:8, Psalm 139

Selected by: Laura Anderson

Seek him that maketh the seven stars and
Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into
the morning. Amen

Like as the hart desireth the water brooks

Text: Psalm 42:1-3

Selected by: Juli Elliot

Life as the hart desireth the water brooks,
so longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is a thirst for God
yea, even for the living God.
When shall I come to appear before God?
My tears have been my meat day and night,
while they daily say unto me
Where, where is now thy God?
When shall I come before the presence of God?

City Called Heaven

Text: American Negro Spiritual

Selected by: Marrlee Burgess

I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow,
I'm left in this old wide world,
this wide world, alone!
Oh, I ain't got no hope for tomorrow
I'm trying to make it make heaven my home.
Sometimes I'm tossed and I'm driven Lord.
Sometimes I just don't know which way to turn
Oh I heard of a city called heaven
I'm trying to make heaven my home.

Lay a Garland

Text: from "The Maid's Tragedy"

by Francis Beaumont (1584-1616)

Selected by: Jeffrey Thompson

Lay a garland on her hearse
of dismal yew.
Maidens, willow branches wear,
say she died true.
Her love was false, but she was firm
Upon her buried body lie lightly,
thou gentle earth.

Selig sind die Toten, SWV 391

Text: Revelation 14:13

Selected by: Stephen Biegner

Selig sind die Toten,
die in dem Herren sterben,
von nun an.
Ja, der Geist spricht:
Sie ruhen von ihrer Arbeit,
und ihre Werke folgen ihnen nach.

Blessed are the dead
which die in the Lord,
from henceforth:
Yea, saith the Spirit,
that they may rest from their labours;
and their works do follow after them.

Sing me to Heaven

Text: Jane Griner

Selected by: Debra McCullough

In my heart's sequestered chambers lie truths stripped of poet's gloss.
Words alone are vain and vacant and my heart is mute.
In response to aching silence memory summons half-heard voices,
and my soul finds primal eloquence and wraps me in song.
If you would comfort me, sing me a lullaby. If you would win my heart, sing me a love song.
If you would mourn me and bring me to God, sing me a requiem. Sing me to heaven.
Touch in me grief and comfort; love and passion, pain and pleasure.
Sing me a lullaby, a love song, a requiem. Love me, comfort me, bring me to God:
Sing me a love song, Sing me to heaven.

Circle of Life

Text: Tim Rice (b.1944)

with Nants' Ingonyama

Music and lyrics by Lebohang

Morale and Hans Zimmer

Selected by: Brent Neeley

Nants ingonyama bagithi Baba
(Sithi uhm ingonyama) yeah, ingonyama
Nants ingonyama bagithi baba
(Sithi uhm ingonyama)
Ingonyama (Ingonyama)
Siyo Nqoba (Ingonyama)
Ingonyama nengw' enamabala

Here is a lion, Father
(We hail the lion) yeah, lion
The royal lion wears his leopard spots

From that day we arrived on the planet
And blinking, stepped into the sun
There's more to see than can ever be seen
More to do than can ever be done.
There's far too much to take in here
More to find than can ever be found
But the sun rolling high through the sapphire sky
Keeps great and small on the endless round.

It's the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
'Til we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the circle
The circle of life

Singers' Stories

Dixit Maria was a piece I enjoyed singing with the early music group Publick Musick. We performed it at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Cortland, a beautiful gothic church much like the one it was probably originally performed in. This is part of a collection of sacred songs Hassler composed during the late sixteenth century. It's a joyful piece and one which is also really fun to sing.

- Marrlee Burgess

I was sitting in the front row of the choir room in the basement of Asbury First United Methodist Church, a brand new member of Madrigalia under the direction of Roger Wilhelm, when we pulled out **O Magnum Mysterium**. The opening (1st Inversion) chord immediately struck my soul, and my heart was hooked. The rich and complex sonority, the depth of the basses, the sharing of the sopranos and tenors, the plaintive cry of the altos - it makes me weep every time. I am blessed to have sung this with three different choirs since the mid-80's. - Kathryn Borden

My wife was a minister of the United Church of Christ. We came to Rochester in the mid 90's, at a time when the Presbyterian Church still had a policy of excluding "unrepentant practicing homosexuals" from serving as ordained clergy. In peaceful protest of that policy, a small group of lesbian singers formed, here at Downtown Church. We called ourselves UPS, which stood for Unrepentant Practicing Singers. **Psalm 23**, arranged by Bobbie McFerrin, was one of our favorites. - Tansy Deutsch

I first sang **The Lake Isle of Innisfree** at a choral conducting class that I took one summer at Ithaca College. I fell in love with the imagery of the text and its musical setting. As I sing this song, I feel that I'm taking a journey to a beautiful and peaceful place, then returning - refreshed and renewed - now holding in my heart all of the beauty and peace that I experienced there. - Debra McCullough

Many of us form very intense bonds with people that we have sung with on our choral journeys. One very important choral "family" of mine was the choir that I sang with for over ten years at the American Cathedral in Paris. About four years ago, a very close friend of mine in the choir lost her husband at a very young age to brain cancer leaving her with two young boys. **Even When He Is Silent** happened to be sung at one of our Thursday evening choir rehearsals while he was fighting his battle and, ultimately, we sang it for his funeral just a few months later. After hearing that these words were written by an imprisoned man during the Second World War and realizing that his impending death was on him, one can feel even more the importance of this simple yet profound text so beautifully set to Arnesen's music. While singing these words of hope at such a dark time, we realized that, as humanity, we all need hope in love for one another. For that is what a choir family truly is for me. - Jeffrey Thompson

When Lee asked the singers for favorite choral pieces, Jonathan Dove immediately came to mind. Not only is he writing some of the most rewarding and challenging music out there right now, but also - as you will soon hear - **Seek Him That Maketh the Seven Stars** has the most glorious organ accompaniment! A rarity! - Laura Anderson

I've loved Herbert Howell's choral music for as long as I can remember. **Like as the Hart**, from the first few verses of Psalm 42, is so beautifully harmonically expressed. Every time he uses the words 'desire' and 'thirst' he uses the same haunting, jazz-like tonal change. I wonder if the profound loss he experienced (something I can relate to and draws me to his writing) has impacted some of the musically moving moments in this piece. Listen for these with the texts, 'Where now is thy God' and 'My tears have been my meat, day and night'. - Juli Elliot

I first experienced **City Called Heaven** a few years ago as a dancer. I was drawn particularly to the evocative emotion it conveys through its grounding pulse, its gospel and jazzy roots, and especially through its words. This song is powerful and one which I thought our group could sing well.
- Marrlee Burgess

Selig sind die Toten by Heinrich Schütz is a piece I always carry around with me in my back pocket. Aside from the incredible text painting and extra crunchy suspensions (and who doesn't love a suspension), it's a piece about death, yet it remains hopeful. The vocal parts seem to skip almost delightedly toward the final cadence. Personally, it has been a work that has been present at many inflection points in my life: it was one of the first pieces that my now wife and I nerded out over while we were still getting to know each other on our long subway rides home from our pro church job on the East Side of Manhattan; it was a central piece in one of the single most rewarding artistic experiences I've been a part of when I was living in NYC; and, most recently, it was a piece I put on a playlist my father asked me to create for him earlier this year that he could listen to as he lay dying of an aggressive, relentless cancer. He didn't listen to much music like this, but was drawn to the color, the text, and the hope within this piece. And it was there, in my back pocket, for the long ride home from Massachusetts back to Rochester after he died, the day before my daughter was born. And now, humbly, it's here, for your back pocket. If you need it. - Stephen Biegner

I was introduced to **Sing Me to Heaven** as a member of the choir at First Unitarian Church. The song brings to mind the many moments and ways that song touches our hearts and minds. What I love most is the title phrase "Sing Me to Heaven," as though the simple act of singing has the gentle power and strength to lift one's soul to another realm. - Debra McCullough

First Inversion

2021–2022 Season Schedule

Friday concerts at 7:30PM and Sunday concerts at 4PM
All concerts at Downtown United Presbyterian Church

For the Joy of Song:
Singers' Favorites
September 24 and 26, 2021

Holding On Through Song III:
Exploring the American Negro Spiritual
October 24, 2021

Waves of Change:
Polyphony Old and New
January 28 and 30, 2022

Contemporary Choral Voices:
Works by Diverse Living Composers
March 6, 2022

Audience Favorites:
June 10 and 12, 2022