



ALATA HARMONIA CHORUS OF CANADA
加拿大昇韻合唱團

Harmonies Across Time

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Orlando Gibbons

George Alexander Macfarren

Charles Villiers Stanford

Randall Thompson

Ruth Watson Henderson

Conductors:

Christopher Si Richard Si

May 4, 2024 at 7:30pm

Good Shepherd Community Church

390 Bamburgh Circle

Scarborough, ON M1W 3X3

email: alata_ahc@yahoo.com

www.alata.ca



Program

Conductor: Christopher Si

The Last Words of David

Music: Randall Thompson

Conductor: Richard Si

Missa: Ut re mi fa so la

Music: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina

Kyrie

Gloria

Credo

***** Intermission *****

Sanctus

Benedictus

Agnus Dei I

Agnus Dei II

Conductor: Christopher Si

The Silver Swan

Music: Orlando Gibbons

Orpheus with his Lute

Music: George Alexander Macfarren

The Blue Bird

Music: Charles Villiers Stanford

Alleluia

Music: Randall Thompson

The River

Music: Ruth Watson Henderson

Sing All Ye Joyful

Pianist: Winnie Leung

Message from Presenter

Good evening, esteemed guests, and welcome to our concert night, "Harmonies Across Time". We are thrilled to have you join us in this musical journey that transcends time and space.

Tonight, we celebrate the rich tapestry of choral music, from the ethereal harmonies of Palestrina and Orlando Gibbons to the stirring compositions of Macfarren and Charles Villiers Stanford. We also pay homage to contemporary maestros like Randall Thompson and Ruth Watson Henderson, whose works continue to inspire and move us.

Our choir has worked tirelessly to bring these timeless pieces to life, each note a testament to our shared love for music. As we delve into the depths of these harmonies, we hope to evoke a sense of unity, a resonance that binds us across time.

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce the inaugural debut of our Youth Singers later this year. This initiative, launched in February, aims to nurture the next generation of choral singers. We invite you all to join us in this new chapter of our journey.

As we embark on tonight's musical voyage, let us remember that music is a universal language that transcends boundaries. It is a beacon of hope, a source of comfort, and a testament to the human spirit.

Thank you for being here with us. Enjoy the concert!

Herbert Au

Chairman

Alata Harmonia Chorus of Canada

Program Notes



Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, born around 1525 in Palestrina, near Rome, Italy, is a renowned figure in the realm of Renaissance music. His life was largely spent in Rome, where he began his musical journey as a choirboy at the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. His talent was recognized early on, leading him to serve as an organist and music teacher in his hometown's cathedral.

Palestrina's work caught the attention of Pope Julius III, who appointed him as the musical director of the Julian Chapel choir.

Palestrina's compositions, numbering over 105 masses and 250 motets, are celebrated for their contrapuntal mastery. His music played a significant role during the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation, representing the conservative approach to church music in the 16th century.

One of Palestrina's notable works is the "**Missa Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La**". This piece is a testament to Palestrina's skill in sacred music, showcasing his adeptness in contrapuntal composition. The mass is written for 6 to 7 voices, with the voicing being SSAATB, and SSAAATB for Agnus II. It was first published in 1570, and the manuscript from 1563 is preserved in Vatican archives. The mass is a beautiful blend of sacred text and intricate polyphony, reflecting Palestrina's deep understanding of musical and liturgical traditions.

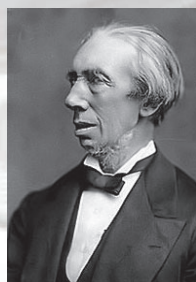
Palestrina passed away on February 2, 1594, in Rome. However, his influence on the development of church and secular music in Europe, especially on the development of counterpoint, continues to resonate. His ability to reconcile the functional and aesthetic aims of Catholic church music in the post-Tridentine period earned him an enduring reputation as the ideal Catholic composer.

Palestrina's life and works, particularly the "**Missa Ut Re Mi Fa Sol La**", serve as a testament to his profound impact on Renaissance music. His compositions continue to inspire and influence music lovers and scholars alike, underscoring his timeless relevance in the world of music.



Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625), an English composer and keyboard player, was a prominent figure in the English Virginalist and Madrigal Schools. Born into a musical family, he was recognized early on for his talent. By the 1610s, he was the leading composer and organist in England.

One of Gibbons' most famous works is "**The Silver Swan**", a madrigal scored for five voices. It presents the legend that swans, largely silent in life, sing beautifully just before their deaths. First published in 1612 in Gibbons' "First Set of Madrigals and Motets of 5 parts", it showcases his mastery of the polyphonic idiom. Gibbons' life was cut short by his sudden death in 1625. However, his influence on the development of church and secular music in Europe continues to resonate.



George Alexander Macfarren (1813-1887), an English composer and musicologist, was a leading figure in the Victorian era. Born in London, he began his musical journey under the guidance of his father, a dancing-master and dramatist. Despite being blind for over half of his career, Macfarren's perseverance led him to prolifically contribute to music and academia. He was knighted in 1883 in recognition of his achievements.

One of Macfarren's notable works is "**Orpheus with his Lute**", a part song for SATB voices. The lyrics, penned by William Shakespeare, are set to Macfarren's soulful composition. First published in 1869, the piece showcases Macfarren's ability to breathe life into classical texts through his music.



Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924), an Anglo-Irish composer, music teacher, and conductor, was a leading figure in the late Romantic era. Born into a highly musical family in Dublin, Stanford was educated at the University of Cambridge before studying music in Leipzig and Berlin. Despite his blindness, Stanford's perseverance led him to prolifically contribute to music and academia. He was knighted in 1901 in recognition of his achievements.

One of Stanford's notable works is "**The Blue Bird**" (Op. 119 No. 3), composed in 1910. It is set to the words of "L'Oiseau Bleu", a poem by Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, which depicts a bluebird in flight over a lake. The piece is written for soprano, divided altos, tenor, and bass. "The Blue Bird" is the third of Stanford's Eight Part Songs, which are all settings of texts by Coleridge. It was widely performed by choral societies in England during Stanford's life and is considered one of the best English partsongs ever written.



Randall Thompson (1899-1984), an American composer, is particularly noted for his choral works. Born in New York City, Thompson attended The Lawrenceville School, where his father was an English teacher. He studied at Harvard University, became assistant professor of music and choir director at Wellesley College, and received a doctorate in music from the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. Thompson taught at the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of Virginia, and Harvard University.

One of Thompson's notable works is "**The Last Words of David**". Commissioned and premiered in 1949 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra to honor Dr. Serge Koussevitzky for 25 years of directorship. Roaring ascending scales in the accompaniment reflect the great strength of this Old Testament text. This piece is dramatically portrayed through the music of Thompson, with the words "He that rules over people must be just and ruling in the fear of God".

Another significant work by Thompson is "**Alleluia**", a piece for unaccompanied SATB chorus. Composed over the first five days of July in 1940, it was given its world premiere on July 8 of that year at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood. The work was written on a commission from Serge Koussevitzky, director of the Tanglewood Festival. The text of the work consists of the word "Alleluia" repeated over and over again. The only other word in the text is "Amen", which is used once at the end.



Ruth Watson Henderson (born 1932) is a celebrated Canadian composer and pianist, known for her significant contributions to choral music. Born in Toronto, she studied piano with Viggo Kihl and Alberto Guerrero at The Royal Conservatory of Music. She served as the accompanist for the Festival Singers of Canada and the Toronto Children's Chorus, where she developed her ear for composing mixed-choral works.

One of Henderson's notable works is "**The River**". This piece, written in memory of John Ford who directed Oriana Women's Choir from 1977 to 1996. Henderson's compositions, including "The River", are celebrated for their use of modal and impressionistic harmonies. Modal harmony involves the use of musical modes, which are scales that include different arrangements of whole and half steps. Impressionistic harmony, on the other hand, is characterized by the use of extended and altered chords, unconventional chord progressions, and the avoidance of traditional tonal resolution. These techniques contribute to the unique sound and emotional depth of Henderson's music.

Another significant work by Henderson is "**Sing All Ye Joyful**", a choral work inspired by the poem of the same name by J.R.R. Tolkien. The poem is found within the chapter "The Last Stage" of "The Hobbit" and was sung by the Elves of Rivendell. The elves sang "loud and clear on the banks of the stream" under the open window of Bilbo Baggins, whom they woke up with their singing.

Henderson's life and works, particularly "The River" and "Sing All Ye Joyful", serve as a testament to her profound impact on choral music. Her compositions continue to inspire and influence music lovers and scholars alike, underscoring her timeless relevance in the world of music.



Alata Harmonia Chorus of Canada

www.alata.ca email: alata_ahc@yahoo.com

Founded in 2002 by the late Maestro Lillian Sit, the Alata Harmonia Chorus of Canada ("Alata") consists of the Alata Harmonia Choir and Alata Chamber Singers. Lillian's goal was to instil the essence of choral music, its multifaceted structure and contextual richness into the choir.

Alata's repertoire covers a wide spectrum of genres: from the west to the east, from classical to contemporary, and from sacred to secular. Since its inception, Alata has performed major choral works by Rossini, Mozart, Gounod, Brahms, Vivaldi, Orff and Durufle. Other performances showcased works of famous Canadian composers Ruth Watson Henderson, Eleanor Daley and Harry Freedman, as well as choral works from notable contemporary composers including Jin Xiang, An-Lun Huang, Mizi Tan, and ethnic folk songs in a cappella. The choir also premiered compositions by local artists Chuan Sha, Erhei Liang, William Wu, Christopher Si and Richard Si.

Apart from hosting regular concerts, Alata has performed in many charitable and cultural events such as fundraising for the victims of South Asia Tsunami, Hurricane Katrina and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB). In 2006, Alata performed in the Chinese New Year television show "The Same Song in Canada" hosted by the Beijing Central Television, a Chinese national broadcasting station. As well, the choristers participated twice in the International Choral Festival in Le Mondial Choral Loto-Quebec. Alata also took part in the third Dong Zhou Cup World Chinese Choral Music Festival held in Beijing in June 2008 where they took home several notable awards. Following the competition, Alata travelled to perform in Beijing, Shanghai, Wuxi and Hong Kong. The choir performed in the "2011 Mandarin Profile Award Ceremony" hosted by Fairchild TV of Canada. In 2013, Alata took part in a fifteen-day choral exchange in Paris, France. The choir was invited in 2017 to perform in Leoncavallo's opera Pagliacci presented by International Grand Music Studio.

For over twenty years Alata has grown through challenging repertoires, choral festivals, community services and learning excursions. We look forward to further flourish in this musical journey in the coming years.

Christopher Si, Conductor



Christopher Si was born in Hong Kong and immigrated to Toronto in 1994. He holds a B.F.A (Hons) in Music degree from York University where he studied composition under Michael Coghlan, David Mott and William Westcott. Christopher has composed many works for choirs, soloists and duets, including several choral works performed by Alata Harmonia Chorus of Canada in concerts.

Richard Si, Conductor



Richard Si began his musical journey with piano and vocal training during his early years, nurturing a deep passion for composition. Upon his enrollment at York University, he delved into the realms of improvisation on the piano, voice, and flute under the guidance of Casey Sokol. He further honed his compositional skills under the tutelage of David Mott and William Westcott, while also mastering choral techniques through the mentorship of Lisette Canton and Stephanie Martin.

To this day, Richard remains actively involved in his local Toronto churches, serving as a choir accompanist, conductor, and composer. His dedication to musical excellence led him to seek additional vocal and conducting training under the esteemed Ms. Lillian Sit. Notably, he helmed the role of the conductor for the Xiao Ping Chorus from 2013 to 2023.

Winnie Leung, Pianist



Winnie began studying piano at the age of four and has always shown a great passion for music. In 2004, Winnie received her Associate Diploma (ARCT) in piano performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM). She has won various awards in music festivals across the Greater Toronto Area.

Winnie has been one of the piano accompanists in Alata Harmonia Chorus since 2006 as well as in church, other choirs, recitals, weddings, music competitions, and exams. In addition, Winnie taught piano for over ten years.

Winnie plays other musical instruments besides piano such as violin and guitar, and enjoys composing and arranging contemporary music.

Board of Directors

Chairman Herbert Au

Board Members

Alex Chan	Emma Chien	Mei Ling Fong
Keith Lai	Lily Kwan	Michael Ngai
Christopher Si	Richard Si	Rosina Wong

Organizing Committee

Committee Members

Herbert Au	Mei Ling Fong	Keith Lai
Pinky Lo	Christopher Si	Richard Si
Rosina Wong		

Photographer Byron Wong

Videotaping Jackie Wong

Conductors

Christopher Si	Richard Si
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Pianist

Winnie Leung

Choir Performers

SOPRANO

June Au Yeung	Susie Chan	Lily Cheung	Emma Chien
Swannie Kwok	Venna Kwok	Cynthia Law	Pinky Lo
Rosina Wong	Beracah Yeung		

ALTO

Emily Chan	Tracy Chan	Kam Ling Cheng	Lily Kwan
Cecilia Lee	Esther Leung	Margie Leung	Christina Malig

TENOR

Justin Au	Eric Chiu	Ray Ip	Edmun Liu
Christopher Si			

BASS

Andrew Chan	Joseph Chan	Leo Chan	Jason Ding
Anthony Lee	Richard Si		



Singspiration, Oct 21, 2023

Many thanks to the following

Volunteers

Leo Chan
Sonia Fung
Connie Lau
Desiree Lee
Mary Mui
Andrea Tan
Jane Zhu

*Thank
you!*

*If you are interested in joining our choir,
please call:*

**(416) 662-8278 or
alata_ahc@yahoo.com**

For our future concerts,
please visit our website:

www.alata.ca

