



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

A Singspiration to Montreal

Antonio Vivaldi: Gloria
Randall Thompson: Frostiana
Imant Raminsh: Ubi Caritas
Imant Raminsh: Ave Verum Corpus
Mendelssohn: Verleih uns Frieden
Chinese Songs

Conductors:

Alex Chan
Christopher Si
Richard Si

Date and time:

Aug 5, 2023, 3:30pm - 5:30 pm

Historic and patrimonial Chapel
Domaine du Fort de la Montagne

2065 rue Sherbrooke Ouest
Montréal, Québec, Canada H3H 1G6
Subway Station (Guy-Concordia or Atwater)
(514) 935-1169

Program

Conductor: Christopher Si

- Verleih uns Frieden (Grant us peace) Music: Felix Mendelssohn
- Ave Verum Corpus Music: Imant Raminsh
- Ubi Caritas Music: Imant Raminsh
- Frostiana Music: Randall Thompson

Conductor: Alex Chan

- Gloria Music: Antonio Vivaldi
- Soprano duet: Lily Cheung & Pinky Lo
- Soprano solo: Venna Kwok
- Alto solo: Maryann Chiu

Conductor: Richard Si

- The Flowers and the Youth Qinghai folk song
Changed Lyrics: Hemei
Arr. : Hu Zengrong
- On the Smooth Galloping Highland Sichuan folk song
Arr. : Hu Zengrong
- On Wings of Petal Music: Qu Xixian
Lyrics: Wang On

Pianist: Winnie Leung

Program Notes

Verleih uns Frieden (Grant us peace) Music by Felix Mendelssohn

Verleih uns Frieden (Grant us peace) is a chorale cantata by Felix Mendelssohn, setting a prayer for peace by Martin Luther. Mendelssohn composed the short work in one movement for mixed choir and orchestra in 1831. It is also known as Verleih uns Frieden gnädiglich.

The text is Martin Luther's "Verleih uns Frieden", a paraphrase of Da pacem Domine, a Latin prayer for peace from the 6th or 7th century based on biblical verses 2 Kings 20:19, 2 Chronicles 20:12,15 and Psalms 72:6–7. It was a regular close of church services in Luther's time.

Mendelssohn (1809-1847) was exposed to Lutheran hymns during his studies with Carl Friedrich Zelter. He composed Verleih uns Frieden in 1831 as one of eight chorale cantatas based on Lutheran hymns which he wrote as studies. He later chose only Verleih uns Frieden for publication.

Ave Verum Corpus

Music by Imant Raminsh

Imant Raminsh (b. 1943), a Canadian composer of Latvian descent, is renowned for his choral compositions. He resides in Coldstream, British Columbia. Born in Ventspils, Latvia, he moved to Canada in 1948 and became a naturalized citizen in 1954. He holds an ARCT diploma in violin from the Royal Conservatory of Music and a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Toronto, where he studied under Elmer Iseler. He also pursued further studies in composition, fugue, violin, and conducting at the Universität Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria.

Ave Verum Corpus is a short Eucharistic chant that has been set to music by many composers. It dates to the 13th century, first recorded in a central Italian Franciscan manuscript (Chicago, Newberry Library, 24). During the Middle Ages it was sung at the elevation of the Eucharist during the consecration at Mass. It was also used frequently during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The prayer is a meditation on Jesus's Real Presence

in the Blessed Sacrament, and ties it to the redemptive meaning of suffering in the life of all believers. Imant Raminsh has created stunningly beautiful music with these texts. His a cappella scoring is carefully crafted (in two available voicings), and the melody and harmonies soar. The rich sonorities ultimately lead to a hushed conclusion.

Ubi Caritas

Music by Imant Raminsh

Ubi Caritas is a hymn of the Western Church, long used as one of the antiphons for the washing of feet on Maundy Thursday. Its text is attributed to Paulinus of Aquileia in 796. The traditional melody probably also stems from the late 8th century. It is now and then sung at Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and has for a long time been part of the Holy Thursday evening liturgy. In the second typical edition (1975) of the current Roman Missal, the antiphonal response was altered to read "Ubi caritas est vera, Deus ibi est," after certain very early manuscripts. This translates as: "Where true charity is, God is there." Commissioned by the Cathedral Church of St. George (Kingston, Ontario), Dr. Mark G. Sirett, Organist and Music Director, in celebration of its Bicentennial May, 1992; the piece is characterized by smooth chant-like melodic tones and modal harmonies.

Frostiana

Music by Randall Thompson

Randall Thompson (1899-1984) was a notable American composer, renowned for his choral works. He attended The Lawrenceville School and later became an assistant professor of music at Wellesley College. Thompson earned a doctorate in music from the University of Rochester and taught at institutions like the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of Virginia, and Harvard University. His compositions include three symphonies, vocal works like "Americana" and "The Testament of Freedom," and the popular choral piece "Alleluia." Thompson had influential students such as Leonard Bernstein and received prestigious awards like the University of Pennsylvania Glee Club Award of Merit.

Frostiana: Seven Country Songs is a choral suite for mixed chorus and piano composed in 1959 by Randall Thompson. Thompson was commissioned by the town of Amherst to write a piece commemorating its bicentennial in 1959. The town was known for its association with Robert Frost, who had lived there for some years. Frost had known Thompson for some time, and admired his music; accordingly, it was decided that the commemorative work would be a setting of some of Frost's poetry. The town suggested "The Gift Outright"; Thompson, however, feared that the text was inappropriate for the occasion, and asked to be allowed to choose his own texts. In the end, the composer selected seven poems, with which he constructed a seven-movement choral suite:

"The Road Not Taken"

"The Pasture"

"Come In"

"The Telephone"

"A Girl's Garden"

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

"Choose Something Like a Star"

As the male and female choruses rehearsed separately, Thompson structured the work so that they sang together only in three of the seven movements; each of the other four was scored for either male voices or female voices alone.

Gloria

Music by Antonio Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi wrote at least three Gloria compositions, settings of the hymn Gloria in excelsis Deo, with words probably dating back to the 4th century, and an integral part of the mass ordinary. Two of them have survived: RV 588 and RV 589. RV 589 is the better-known setting of the Gloria, simply known as the Vivaldi "Gloria" because of its outstanding popularity. This piece was composed at the same time during Vivaldi's employment at the Ospedale della Pietà, one of four charitable institutions for the orphaned and abandoned girls of Venice. Vivaldi served as music director at the Pietà where he taught music to and composed for the Pietà's girls.

The Gloria itself is a joyful hymn of praise and worship divided into 12 relatively brief movements, ranging from festive brilliance to profound sadness.

Movements

1. Gloria in Excelsis (Chorus)
2. Et in Terra Pax (Chorus)
3. Laudamus Te (Duet for Sopranos I and II)
4. Gratias Agimus Tibi (Chorus)
5. Propter Magnam Gloriam (Chorus)
6. Domine Deus (Soprano Solo)
7. Domine Fili Unigenite (Chorus)
8. Domine Deus, Agnus Dei (Alto and Chorus)
9. Qui Tollis (Chorus)
10. Qui Sedes ad Dexteram (Alto Solo)
11. Quoniam Tu Solus Sanctus (Chorus)
12. Cum Sancto Spiritu (Chorus)

The text of the Gloria begins by quoting one of the more theatrical passages of the Bible, from the story of the Nativity in the Gospel of Luke, in which an angel announces Christ's birth to the shepherds: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (Luke ii.14).

The second section of the Gloria contemplates the significance of God's incarnation in the figure of his son, which Vivaldi explored through three different dances, "Domine Deus", "Domine Fili Unigenite," and "Domine Deus, Agnus Dei".

The musical vision then shifted from Christ as shepherd, to Christ as Lord, and to Christ as sacrifice. Towards the end of the piece, Vivaldi affirmed the role of Christ as redeemer before the choral "Cum Sancto Spiritu" brings the Gloria to a close by invoking the Holy Spirit and completing the Trinity.

The Flowers and the Youth

Qinghai folk song

"Flowers" and "Youth" are the names of folk songs of the Hui tribe. "Flowers" have been popular among the regions of Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia and Xinjiang for over 300 years, probably derived from Yuan music. In Qinghai, "Flowers" are also known as "Youth", and are usually sung among the fields and hills, away from family members and the seniors.

This song "The Flowers and the Youth" is so named because the male

voices address the female voices as “flowers” and the female voices address the male ones as “youth”. The song uses the spring flower peony to symbolize young girls and spring to symbolize young lads they are in love with. With the bright and open melody and the humorous metaphors, this song has become the best known of the Qinghai folk songs.

On the Smooth Galloping Highland

Sichuan folk song

This folk song is widely known to school kids in China. It has also become well-known internationally. It has been chosen by N.A.T.A. as one of “The Ten Most Representative Songs of the World.” and was sent up to space, thus winning the fame of being the “Heavenly Sound” and “Song of the Universe”. It has also been recommended by the United Nation as one of “The Ten Most Influential Folk Songs of the World”. Many countries have collected it into their teaching curriculum.

The song was the ingenuous production of country folks who sang it as a way of expressing their life.

On Wings of Petal

Music by Qu Xixian

In this folk song, petals symbolize letters from students to their teachers. They deliver good wishes to the teachers and carry news of the students’ accomplishments in bringing about progress and hope to the country. The teachers’ dedication is being remembered by accomplished students from afar.

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 instill 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.