

Nobles Music Department Presents a....
Virtual Choral Concert
Thursday January 14, 7pm

Program Order and Notes

Middle School Chorus, directed by Nhung Truong

Tres Cantos Nativos dos Indios Krao (Three Native Songs by the Krao Tribe), arr. Marcos Leite

Marcos Leite is a prolific Brazilian composer, conductor, pianist, and contemporary popular artist. This work, composed in 1982, is based on melodies of the Krao tribe of northwestern Brazil. The piece consists of three movements and the text is not known; the text should be seen as a group of phonemes (distinct sounds in a specific language).

The first movement sets up the scene for the overall piece where the choir creates sounds imitating a rainforest. The singers improvised these during rehearsal. This leads to the lower voices providing a strong, earthy and open pedal tone, which accompanies the main melody performed in a canon-like style by the sopranos and altos. The main melody text is:

Dekeke korirare he
Jaramutum korirare

The second movement begins with another improvisatory section, this time using spoken text. The score calls for one “leader” to declare the text, followed by everyone else excitedly joining in. I had the students picture a scene where one person is ready and is inviting everyone else to join them in song. The latter eventually happens, where the singers joyously sing:

Patcho parrot adjosire
Iuener kaporra doj sire

At the end of this movement, the rainforest sounds return.

The final movement is composed of two melodies, the first of which is very reminiscent of a march, the second of which is very playful and sounds like a “teasing” melody we often sang in a very nasal manner to each other growing up (see if you recognize it!). The repeated sections of this movement end with a distinct effect, where the singers produced sound by sucking in air through closed teeth, once again creating a forest-like and rustic atmosphere. The main melody text is:

Kamerrera kideri kema
Tioiremo uaritete aham

Noteorious, led by Eleni Kolovos '21, Sidnie Kulik '21

Sunday Candy by Nico Segal and the Social Experiment, arr. Rishi Khanna '20

Treble Singers of Concert Choir, directed by Nhung Truong

Winter Song by Sara Bareilles and Ingrid Michaelson, arr. Mac Huff

Half-Notes, directed by Nhung Truong

Fight Song by Rachel Platten and Dave Bassett, arr. Nhung Truong

Greensleeves, directed by Michael Turner

Criminal Improv, conceived and produced by Kathryn Cloonan, '21

Sometimes the best thing a music director can do is to step back and let the musicians do what they do. Following a Chamber Singers rehearsal, in which the students were improvising over a variety of pre-recorded backing tracks, Kathryn Cloonan—Chamber Singers soprano and one of the Greensleeves' senior leaders—was inspired to try creating her own piece. As Kathryn said: "The inspiration came from playing around on Soundtrap [online recording software] after Chamber Singers. I put together a mix of pre-recorded tracks and then my own version of Britney Spears' 'Criminal' and told the girls to improvise over it. I said they could sing songs they thought would go well or make up their own parts, and I'm so proud of the final product!" Over the course of the next two rehearsals, each member of the group contributed their own improvised tracks, inspired by Kathryn's lead. Kathryn then did all of the audio mixing and arranging as well as the video editing. The resulting recording, "Criminal Improv," is surely unlike anything the group has ever done before, and is a unique, impressive piece of work.

Upper School Concert Choir, directed by Nhung Truong

Three Spirituals, arr. Ysaye Barnwell

Ysaye Barnwell is a contemporary female African-American composer. She is well-known for her work with the group Sweet Honey in the Rock, an ensemble focusing on African American music, history and culture. In this work, she arranges three well-known African American spirituals in a way where all three can be layered on top of each other. The spiritual "Wade in the Water" is arranged in two ways, one way simply as the traditional melody and the other way set to create a bass line ostinato. The other two spirituals utilized are "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" and "I Wanna Die Easy." All of these melodies cater to the theme of escape and heading "home," and in many African American spirituals, this symbolizes death. I chose to have the singers focus on the "Wade in the Water" melody, which all singers begin with. As the arrangement progresses, the other melodies are layered in, finally circling back to the original melody.

Nobleonians, directed by Nhung Truong

Drift Away by Mentor Williams, arr. Nhung Truong

Chamber Singers, directed by Michael Turner

Summer is Gone by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912) was an English composer of Sierra-Leonean descent. He was a graduate of London's Royal College of Music, where he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford. In 1900 he was the youngest delegate to participate in the First Pan-African Conference in London. Here he met W.E.B. Du Bois and poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, many of whose texts Coleridge-Taylor would later set to music. In 1904 he was received at the White House by President Theodore Roosevelt, a rare honor in that time for someone of African descent. His *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* (based on the epic poem by Longfellow) sold hundreds of thousands of copies, making it one of the most successful and popular works of the previous 50 years. Sadly, he had sold the rights before publication in order to receive much-needed income. "Summer is Gone," Coleridge-Taylor's setting of the poem "Bitter For Sweet" by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894), features lush romantic harmonies and striking dynamic expressiveness. The highly chromatic lines are extremely challenging (even more-so given that in the production of tonight's recording, the singers never had the opportunity to hear each other in rehearsal!)

In spite of his remarkable artistic achievements and world-wide acclaim, Coleridge-Taylor died in relative poverty of pneumonia at the age of 37. For more about Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, we recommend this wonderful documentary: [Samuel Coleridge Taylor and His Music in America, 1900-1912](#).

Imani, directed by Nhung Truong

Lift Every Voice and Sing by John Rosamond Johnson, arr. Horace Scruggs, III

The original hymn, *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, was composed in 1900 by John Rosamond Johnson and based on text written by his brother, James Weldon Johnson. The hymn was written for Abraham Lincoln's birthday and was first performed by 500 school children of color in his honor. The piece gained recognition over the years with consistent performance by this choir to the point where in 1919, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) designated it as the Negro National Anthem. Over the years, the hymn has been performed and arranged in a variety of ways at various events, from church services, to protests, to NFL games alongside the *Star Spangled Banner*. The hymn consists of three verses, with lyrics acknowledging slavery, marching for change, and hope as African Americans began holding powerful and influential positions particularly in the North in the early 1900s. For a more in-depth analysis of the text, please visit [this comprehensive interactive website by CNN](#).

This particular arrangement by Horace Scruggs, III, a contemporary African American arranger, composer, conductor and music producer, focuses on the first verse of the original hymn. He set the text in a traditional manner, honoring the original melody, while also adding elements of the gospel style, such as call and response between a soloist and choir, and repeated layered ostinatos, the latter of which is heard towards the end of the arrangement.