

the re waking

I carry your heart with me (2003)

by Abbie Betinis

Together (2012)

by Melissa Dunphy

Songs of lowly life (2011)

by Stacy Garrop

What it might say (2015)

by Ted Hearne

Invitation to love (2016)

by Jennifer Higdon

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by David Lang

Gratitude sutra (2013)

by Forrest Pierce

We walked through the trees (2014)

by Sarah Rimkus

The re waking (2005)

by Augusta Read Thomas

November prayer (2007)

by Christopher Theofanidis

All we need (2015) and **Perhaps** (2017)

by Dale Trumbore

The gentlest thing (2001)

by Trevor Weston



THE ESOTERICS

Directed by Eric Banks

Friday | 19 November 2021 | 8pm

Queen Anne Christian Church

1316 3rd Avenue West | Seattle

Saturday | 20 November 2021 | 3pm

St John's Episcopal Church

114 20th Avenue Southeast | Olympia

the re waking

P R O G R A M

Please turn off all noise-making devices, and refrain from talking during the performance. Thank you.

We walked through the trees (2014)

Sarah Rimkus (b 1990)

Songs of lowly life (2011)

Stacy Garrop (b 1969)

- I. Dawn
- II. Life
- III. Not they who soar
- IV. Lullaby
- V. Old

What it might say (2016)

Ted Hearne (b 1982)

Make peace (2016)

David Lang (b 1957)

The gentlest thing (2001)

Trevor Weston (b 1967)

The re waking (2005)

Augusta Read Thomas (b 1964)

INTERMISSION

Invitation to love (2016)

Jennifer Higdon (b 1962)

I carry your heart (2003)

Abbie Betinis (b 1980)

Gratitude sutra (2013)

Forrest Pierce (b 1972)

November prayer (2007)

Christopher Theofanidis (b 1967)

Together (2012)

Melissa Dunphy (b 1980)

All we need (2015)

Dale Trumbore (b 1987)

- * solo quartet in Rimkus
- † soloist in Garrop I
- ° soloist in Garrop IV
- ‡ solo quartet in Weston
- § soloist quartet in Pierce
- ¶ soloist in Dunphy

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T H E E S O T E R I C S

Now on the cusp of its 29th concert season, Seattle's most innovative chorus has drawn local, national, and international praise for performing rarely-heard compositions of contemporary music for unaccompanied voices, for infusing elements of the literary, theatrical, and visual arts into the typical concert experience, and for inspiring and performing new *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings by composers around the world. In early 1992, Eric Banks brought together a group of friends to perform his Master's and Doctoral recitals in Choral Studies at the University of Washington. After Banks' recitals were completed, the group wanted to keep singing together, so Banks chose a name for his ensemble based on the Greek adjective εσοτερικος – which describes a close-knit community and the secret knowledge that its members share. Since incorporating with this name in 1993, The Esoterics has performed hundreds of concerts throughout the Pacific Northwest, has commissioned and premiered hundreds of new works for *a cappella* voices in myriad languages, and has mastered many of the most virtuosic choral works of the last century in concerts described as “compelling,” “crafted,” “luxuriant,” “lyrical,” “sumptuous,” and “superb.” The Esoterics has released twenty-one CD recordings on its own label (Terpsichore) and has been honored to compete at the 2000 Cork International Choral Festival (Ireland), the 2001 Certamen Coral de Tolosa (Spain), and the 2006 Harald Andersen International Choir Competition in Helsinki (Finland). As well, The Esoterics has demonstrated its continuing commitment to choral education in becoming the only choral ensemble in Washington State that grants continuing-education credit to its members who also teach in the public schools. In recognition for its efforts in choral education and innovation, The Esoterics has been honored five times with the ASCAP and Chorus America Award for the Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music (in 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008, and 2017). The Esoterics has been honored to receive grants from the arts commissions of Washington State, King County, and the City of Seattle, as well as funding from Amazon, Google, Microsoft, the Seattle Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the BMI Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Esoterics is a proud member chorus of ACDA (the American Choral Directors Association), Chorus America, IFCM (the International Federation for Choral Music), and GALA (the Gay and Lesbian Association of Choruses).

M I S S I O N S T A T E M E N T

The Esoterics is a Seattle-based vocal ensemble that is dedicated to performing and perpetuating contemporary *a cappella* choral settings of poetry, philosophy, and spiritual writings from around the world.

While cultivating artistic expression and cultural understanding among its singers and audience alike, The Esoterics aspires to reflect the beauty, power, and significance that are inherent in the music of our time.

E R I C B A N K S

As a conductor, composer, clinician, vocalist, linguist, and ethnomusicologist, Eric Banks has garnered significant acclaim as one of the most creative and compelling choral directors in the United States for his unwavering commitment to new music for unaccompanied voices. In 1992, Eric founded The Esoterics, a professional-caliber chamber chorus in Seattle whose mission is to perform and perpetuate contemporary choral music beyond the scope of the established *a cappella* canon. After completing his BA in Composition at Yale University in 1990, Eric relocated to Seattle to study in the departments of Choral Studies and Music Theory at the University of Washington. His MM thesis (1992) is a performance edition of *Dixit Dominus* by Chiara Margarita Cozzolani; his MA thesis (1995) is a postmodern analysis of Arvo Pärt's *Credo*; and his DMA dissertation (1996) surveys the choral music of Mexican composer and Aztec ethnomusicologist Carlos Chávez. In 1997, at the conclusion of his graduate study, Banks traveled to Sweden as a Fulbright Scholar and Lois Roth Fellow in order to learn more about its contemporary choral culture. While in Stockholm, Eric performed with several ensembles, including the Swedish Radio Choir and the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir. In his music, Eric is drawn to ideas that are ‘esoteric’ in origin, and chooses to express concepts that are undiscovered, under-represented, or not easily decipherable to a wider audience. As a composer, Banks has been able to combine his love of poetry, foreign language, classical civilization, social justice, comparative religion, and the natural sciences to create a growing repertoire of new works for *a cappella* chorus. Several of Banks' commissioned works have been recorded by The Esoterics, and can be found on CDs released on the Terpsichore label. Eric was a visiting scholar at the Royal Conservatory of Music and Swedish National Radio in Stockholm, as well as at the Cama Oriental Institute in Mumbai, India. Winner of the 2010 *Dale Warland Singers Commission Award* from Chorus America and the American Composers Forum, Eric has received composition and research grants from 4Culture, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Artist Trust, the Atwood Foundation, New Music USA, the San Francisco Arts Commission, Seattle CityArtists, the Washington State Arts Commission, and three “creativity” grants the National Endowment for the Arts. His upcoming premieres include pieces for Ember in New York City, Mikrokosmos in Paris, and the San Francisco Girls Chorus. Eric lives in Seattle with David Gellman, his husband of 24 years (who is also The Esoterics' graphic design guru). You can read more about Eric's work on his own webpage: www.ericbanks.com. Eric is a member of ASCAP.

TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

We walked through the trees (2014)

composed by Sarah Rimkus

setting the poem **Being but men** by Dylan Thomas

Being but men, we walked through trees
Afraid, letting our syllables be soft
For fear of waking the rooks,
For fear of coming
Noiselessly into a world of wings and cries.

If we were children we might climb,
Catch the rooks sleeping, and break no twig,
And, after the soft ascent,
Thrust out our heads above the branches
To wonder at the unfailing stars.

Out of confusion, as the way is,
And the wonder, that man knows,
Out of the chaos would come bliss.

That, then, is loveliness, we said,
Children in wonder watching the stars,
Is the aim and the end.

Being but men, we walked through the trees.

Songs of lowly life (2011)

composed by Stacy Garrop

setting five poems by Paul Laurence Dunbar

I. Dawn

An angel, robed in spotless white,
Bent down and kissed the sleeping night.
Night woke to blush; the sprite was gone.
Men saw the blush and called it dawn.

II. Life

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,
A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double;
And that is life!

A crust and a corner that love makes precious,
With the smile to warm and the tears to re-fresh us;
And joy seems sweeter when cares come after,
And a moan is the finest of foils for laughter;
And that is life!

III. Not They Who Soar

Not they who soar, but they who plod
Their rugged way, unhelped, to God
Are heroes; they who higher fare,
And, flying, fan the upper air,
Miss all the toil that hugs the sod.
'Tis they whose backs have felt the rod,
Whose feet have pressed the path unshod,
May smile upon defeated care,
Not they who soar.

High up there are no thorns to prod,
Nor boulders lurking 'neath the clod
To turn the keenness of the share,
For flight is ever free and rare;
But heroes they the soil who've trod,
Not they who soar!

IV. Lullaby

Sing me, sweet, a soothing psalm,
Holy, tender, low, and calm,
Full of drowsy words and dreamy,
Sleep half seen where the sides are seamy;
Lay my head upon your breast;
Sing me to rest.

V. Old

I have seen peoples come and go
Alike the ocean'd ebb and flow;
I have seen kingdoms rise and fall
Like springtime shadows on a wall.
I have seen houses rendered great
That grew from life's debased estate,
And all, all, all is change I see,
So, dearest God, take me, take me.

What it might say (2015)

composed by Ted Hearne

setting a text by Donald Woods Winnicott,
from **Communication between infant and mother,**
compared and contrasted (1968)

I find you;
you survive
what I do to you
as I come to recognize you
as not-me;
I use you;
I forget you;
But you remember me;
I keep forgetting you;
I lose you;
I am sad.

Make peace (2016)

composed by David Lang

setting words by the composer,
after the mourner's Kaddish

if you can make peace
make peace
in the heavens
in us
in all the world
make peace

The gentlest thing (2001)

composed by Trevor Weston

setting a text from the **Tao te ching,**
translated by Stephen Mitchell

The gentlest thing in the world
overcomes the hardest thing in the world.

That which has no substance
enters where there is no space.

This shows the value of non-action.

The reworking (2005)

composed by Augusta Read Thomas

setting a poem by William Carlos Williams

Sooner or later
we must come to the end
of striving

to re-establish
the image the image of
the rose

but not yet
you say extending the
time indefinitely

by your love
until a whole
spring

rekindle
the violet to the very
lady's-slipper

and so by
your love the very sun
itself is revived

INTERMISSION

Invitation to love (2016)

composed by Jennifer Higdon

setting a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Come when the nights are bright with stars
Or come when the moon is mellow;
Come when the sun his golden bars
Drops on the hay-field yellow.

Come in the twilight soft and gray,
Come in the night or come in the day,
Come, O love, whene'er you may,
And you are welcome, welcome.

You are sweet, O Love, dear Love,
You are soft as the nesting dove.
Come to my heart and bring it to rest
As the bird flies home to its welcome nest.

Come when my heart is full of grief
Or when my heart is merry;
Come with the falling of the leaf
Or with the redd'ning cherry.

Come when the year's first blossom blows,
Come when the summer gleams and glows,
Come with the winter's drifting snows,
And you are welcome, welcome.

This... invitation to love...

I carry your heart with me (2003)

composed by Abbie Betinis

setting a poem by e. e. cummings

i carry your heart with me
(i carry it in my heart)
i am never without it (anywhere
i go you go, my dear;

and whatever is done by only me
is your doing, my darling)
i fear no fate
(for you are my fate, my sweet)

i want no world
(for beautiful you are my world, my true)
and it's you are
whatever a moon has always meant
and whatever a sun will always sing is you

here is the deepest secret nobody knows
(here is the root of the root
and the bud of the bud
and the sky of the sky
of a tree called life;

which grows higher
than soul can hope or mind can hide)
and this is the wonder
that's keeping the stars apart

i carry your heart
(i carry it in my heart)

Gratitude sutra (2013)

composed by Forrest Pierce
*setting the **Prayer for the great family**
by Gary Snyder, after a Mohawk prayer*

Gratitude to Mother Earth:
Sailing through night and day,
And to her soil: rich, rare, and sweet.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to plants:
The sun-facing, light-changing leaf
And fine root-hairs;
Standing still through wind and rain;
Their dance is in the flowing spiral grain.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to air:
Bearing the soaring swift
And the silent owl at dawn;
Breath of our song,
Clear spirit breeze.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to wild beings:
Our brothers, teaching secrets,
Freedoms and ways;
Who share with us their milk;
Self-complete, brave, and aware.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to water:
Clouds, lakes, rivers, glaciers;
Holding or releasing;
Streaming through all
Our bodies salty seas.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to the sun:
Blinding pulsing light
Through trunks of trees,
Through mists, warming caves
Where bears and snakes sleep,
He who wakes us.
In our minds so be it.

Gratitude to the Great Sky:
Who holds billions of stars,
And goes yet beyond that,
Beyond all powers and thoughts
And yet is within us.

Grandfather Space.
The mind is his wife.
So be it.

November prayer (2007)

composed by Christopher Theofanidis
setting a poem by Amy Beth Kirsten

Let love come in whatever way it will.
In music, in friendship, in love for myself,
for others, for my family.
To all who are my family.
Strangers. Friends on the street.
To the homeless, the broken,
let love come in whatever way it will.

Let love come.
To the thankful who know how to love,
to the calm, to the awake,
to the joyful, let love come.
And when it does
(that gigantic, magnificent mirror)
it will tell us at all times we are one,
how beautiful we are.

Together (2012)

composed by Melissa Dunphy
setting verses from the Bible, Acts 2:44-46

And all they that believed were together
and had all things common.
Their possessions and goods
they sold and divided them to all,
according as every one had need.

And continuing daily
with one accord in the temple,
and breaking bread from house to house,
they took their meat
with gladness and simplicity of heart.

All we need (2015)

composed by Dale Trumbore
*setting the poem **Earth day** by Annie Finch*

All we want is to find the love
In the faces of the people we love.

All we need is to find the dark
In the nighttime sky,
To lie down to sleep in the darkness,
Where stars and moon keep vigil,
In the silence of a sleeping earth.

All we require is to wake to sunlight
In the morning, to simple sky,
To breathe aloud as the sky is breathing,
To drink the water of the earth.

All we need is to touch the planet
And find it clean where we were born,
Where our ancestors breathed and planted,
Where we live with the plants and birds.

All we need is to live with the memory
Of a future we want to imagine.

All we need is to find the love
In the face of the planet we love.

THE ESOTERICS 2022 SEASON

aspalmeiras
the mystery of the palms

8 · 9 · 10 April 2022

lesnuages
the shifting of the skies

17 · 18 · 19 June 2022

heshodawe
the message of the ruins

7 · 8 · 9 October 2022

alwidyan
the conference of the birds

17 · 18 · 19 December 2022

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about the concerts in
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1997

ANTIPHONIA

Masterpieces for double chorus
1999

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The elements in their season
2001

PENITENTIA

Ancient petitions for mercy and peace
2004

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American inspiration and the modern madrigal
2005

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The triumph of iambic pentameter
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NOTTURNA

Odes and airs for the ephemeral hours
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Meditations on the wholeness of being
2008

RU'IA

Sacred visions inspired by Islam
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Dreams that reach across the heavens
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Samuel Barber's collected choral works
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The seven creations of ancient Persia
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Meditating on the cusp of light and darkness
2011

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A modern answer to the ancient call
2013

AEONIA

At the door to eternity
2013

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Music of the oceans, lakes, and seas
2015

SYLVANA

Music of the forest, flowers, and trees
2015

AETHERIA

Music of the sky, air, and atmosphere
2015

SYBILLA

The complete Hildegard motets of Frank Ferko
2016

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Cultivating community
2018

THE ESOTERICS

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If you would like to receive information about future concerts, or are interested in volunteering, please contact us:

The Esoterics | 1815 24th Avenue | Seattle WA 98122-3014 | 206.551.1379 | info@TheEsoterics.org

The Esoterics would like to acknowledge our generous rehearsal and concert venues, as well as their staff, for their contributions to The Esoterics success each year:

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