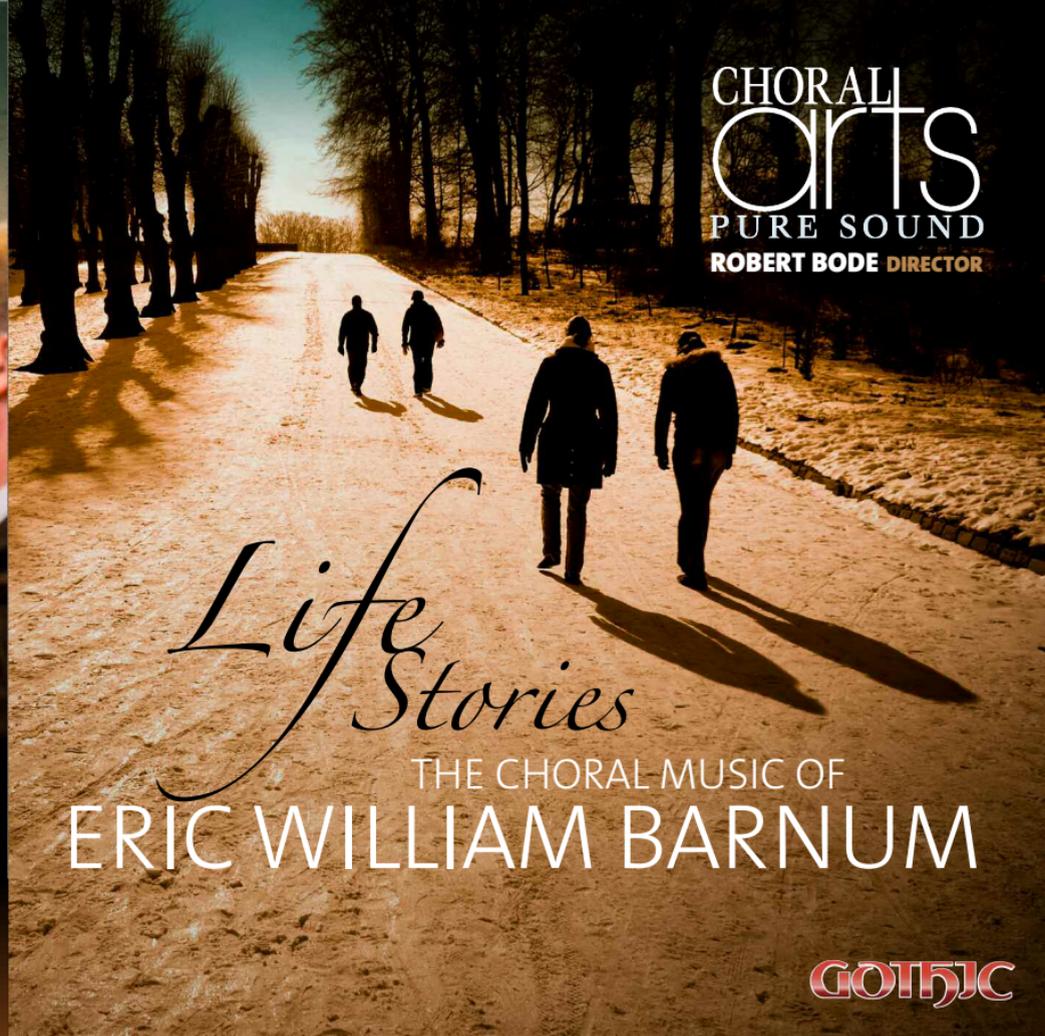




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CHORAL
arts
PURE SOUND
ROBERT BODE DIRECTOR

Life Stories
THE CHORAL MUSIC OF
ERIC WILLIAM BARNUM

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Life Stories

CHORAL
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THE CHORAL MUSIC OF ERIC WILLIAM BARNUM

*When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;
How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim Soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face;
And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.*

— William Butler Yeats



1		Sweetheart of the Sun	5:01
2		Jenny Kiss'd Me	1:31
3		Afternoon on a Hill	4:42
4		Moonlight Music	5:45
5		The Stars Stand Up in Air	5:19
6		Requiescat	5:36
7		Healing Heart	7:20
		<i>Anneliese Johnson, solo</i>	
8		Across the Fields	5:35
9		Chronologic	3:40
10		Remembered Light	6:32
11		Take My Hand	4:03

TOTAL TIME: 55:07



the music

SWEETHEART OF THE SUN

The love story of Ruth and Boaz was masterfully captured by 19th-century poet Thomas Hood in his poem titled *Ruth*. It depicts perhaps the first moment Boaz saw his love in a harvest field, gleaning corn. The sun shines warmly on the scene and is mirrored in the warm harmonies and musical textures throughout. Pastoral and calm, there are hints of glistening gleams of light and shadows cast while praise ascends into the air from the blessedness of Ruth. One can see the gentle hand of Boaz, amid a ray of light, stretch forth to her, saying, 'lay thy sheaf adown and come, share my harvest and my home.'

She stood so fair amid the corn,
Clasp'd by the golden light of morn,
Like the sweetheart of the sun,
Who many a glowing kiss had won.

On her cheek an autumn flush,
Deeply ripen'd; – such a blush
In the midst of brown was born,
Like red poppies grown with corn.

Round her eyes her tresses fell,
Which were blackest none could tell,
But long lashes veil'd a light,
That had else been all too bright.

And her hat, with shady brim,
Made her tressy forehead dim;
Thus she stood amid the stooks,
Praising God with sweetest looks: –

Sure, I said, Heav'n did not mean,
Where I reap thou shouldst but glean,
Lay thy sheaf adown and come,
Share my harvest and my home.*

–THOMAS HOOD (1799-1845)

* *Text of the poem as it appears in the choral setting, modified by the composer.*



JENNY KISS'D ME

One of James Leigh Hunt's most famous short poems remains *Jenny Kiss'd Me*, and its enchanting turn of phrase has delighted readers of all ages. It offers an image of an old man, grown frail by time, remembering with brilliance a moment in youth when beautiful Jenny jumped out of her chair to kiss him when they met. No matter how weary, how ailing he may feel, the joy of remembering Jenny will stay with him and gladden his heart. A sparkling and bouncy tune escorts the fanciful rhyme, climaxing in a defiant 'say I'm growing old!' A coy send-off closes the piece, remembering one final time the fateful kiss of Jenny.

Jenny kiss'd me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in!
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have miss'd me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me.

–LEIGH HUNT (1784-1859)



AFTERNOON ON A HILL

With her timeless poem, Edna St. Vincent Millay has captured the concept of 'home' perhaps more beautifully than any. Many musical settings of the text respond to moments on nature's hill, and its intense and glorious beauty on display. Though it examines pastoral themes, this setting focuses on transience, transformation, and nostalgia. St. Vincent Millay answers the question: What would a person who is 'the gladdest thing under the sun' act like? They would 'touch a hundred flowers and not pick one.' They would look, watch, listen, and be at peace. They would allow Time - time to sit, be quiet, to be. So much time is allowed that evening descends by the end of the lyric and home must be seen from the hilltop, which is the truly glorious climax. There is my home! Amid all lights in the town, there is *my* home. The close of the piece employs a haunting and slightly ominous musical feel. It attempts to capture the idea of joy rather than happiness. The experience on the hill will always remain a fleeting one, as we cannot stop time. And so we laugh, we sigh, we breathe, and then when time catches us, we mark the light which must be ours, and go home.

I will be the gladdest thing
Under the sun!
I will touch a hundred flowers
And not pick one.

I will look at cliffs and clouds
With quiet eyes,
Watch the wind bow down the grass,
And the grass rise.

And when lights begin to show
Up from the town,
I will mark which must be mine,
And then start down!

—EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892-1950)



MOONLIGHT MUSIC

Two of William Shakespeare's most famous lyrics are fused together in *Moonlight Music*, taking the listener on a seductive journey only music could usher. An introduction to Lorenzo's moonlit bank of *The Merchant of Venice* opens the piece. The sounds of music creep while moonlight sleeps and the soft stillness of night becomes the touches of sweet harmony. Ferdinand's dreamy ode to music from *The Tempest* overtakes the first scene. Also sitting on a bank, after following music's alluring strains over the water, he is filled with a fear that it has stopped, leaving him alone and in silence. In a famous sigh of relief, he cries, 'No, it begins again,' and Lorenzo returns on the bank filled with moonlight, allowing the music to once again creep in his ears.

The Merchant of Venice (Act V, Scene 4)

Lorenzo:

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

The Tempest (Act I, Scene 2)

Ferdinand:

This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air. Thence I have followed it,
Or it hath drawn me rather. But 'tis gone.
No, it begins again.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

THE STARS STAND UP IN THE AIR

Composed to a rare poem by Irishman Thomas MacDonagh, it describes the torture of lost love. Such was the power of this love, that the poet cannot help proclaiming she was more beautiful than music itself, and now that she is gone, he wishes all music were mute. Yet throughout the poem, he cannot help avowing her beauty with wild statements, culminating in 'She's more fair than the stars where they stand –' Such a love, when it disappears, can leave a hole in the heart so large, perhaps the only response one can give as MacDonagh does in a final remark: 'Tis my grief that her ever I knew!' The music is highly romantic with flowing melodies and dramatic phrasing, narrating the past joy and present pain of the jilted lover.



The stars stand up in the air
The sun and the moon are gone,
The strand of its waters is bare.
And her sway is swept from the swan.

The cuckoo was calling all day,
Hid in the branches above,
How my stóirín is fled away,
'Tis my grief that I gave her my love.

Three things through love I see –
Sorrow and sin and death –
And my mind reminding me
That this doom I breathe with my breath.

But sweeter than violin or lute
Is my love – and she left me behind.
I wish that all music were mute,
And I to all beauty were blind.

She's more shapely than swan by the
strand,
She's more radiant than grass after dew,
She's more fair than the stars where they
stand –
'Tis my grief that her ever I knew!

—THOMAS MACDONAGH (1878-1916)

RESQUIESCAT

Requiescat, an elegy written by Oscar Wilde, is a stunning remembrance on the death of his young sister. When Wilde was twelve, his ten-year-old sister, Isola, became suddenly ill from fever and passed away. It is impossible for one not to get drawn into the imagery of despair outlined by the master poet, who was only nineteen when he composed the lyric. A semi-chorus repeats the Latin phrase 'Requiescat in pace' (rest in peace) throughout, which is a short epitaph that wishes eternal rest to the deceased. The main choir, as if standing beside the grave itself, responds with each successive verse, amplifying visions and memories of the deceased girl. The piece comes to a bitter end with a realization that no, she will not hear the poet's passionate strain, nor music played. The climax of the piece is the most poignant phrase: 'All my life's buried here.' As earth is subsequently heaped upon the grave, shovel by shovel, her memory descends lower and lower. A final recitation of 'Requiescat in pace' remains hanging prayerfully in the air.



Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast;
I vex my heart alone,
She is at rest.

Peace, peace; she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet;
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

—OSCAR WILDE (1854-1900)

HEALING HEART

An exploration of time, silence, and human fragility, *Healing Heart* takes the beautiful Robert Bode poem and bends it unique ways, creating a dramatic journey from pain to peace. Composed on Bainbridge Island in the Puget Sound, the piece imagines a veiled and quiet place where time and seasons reign, where hurts of the past are slowly forgotten with the sigh of tides and fall's surrender into snow. The music mourns and longs through layers of wonder, cresting at a simple call of the heart to venture out from the dark into the light once again.

Here, time is moving
In quiet breaths and
In the long, slow turn of seasons.

Here the pain of love's arrow,
Once scarlet,
Fades to memory.

Here the sigh of tides
And fall's surrender into snow
Mark a white forgetting.

Here, layers of wonder
And the heart's gentle song
Call us out again
 into the morning,
 into the light.

—ROBERT BODE (B.1957)

ACROSS THE FIELDS

In a word, *Across the Fields* explores 'transience.' One sees transience under every stone, around every corner, and in every relationship of life. This fleeting quality to all things and the inevitability of death remains an issue with which humanity has a difficult time dealing. As the seasons change each year, the earth is reminded, in a powerful way, of the passing of time with the entrance of autumn and movement toward winter. While reading the text of *Across the Fields*, by poet and artist Walter Crane, one can almost smell the drying hay or see the falling leaves of maple trees blowing in the wind. The

music attempts to capture these images with its myriad of colors and openness of harmonies, sometimes stagnant, sometimes flowing. The piece comes to its ultimate climax with a rapturous strain from the chorus to the text 'and summer breathes a passing sigh.' And with the wind of coming winter, one may hear the echo of children playing in a distant field. Spring will come again. *Across the Fields* was commissioned by Geoffrey Boers and the University of Washington Chamber Singers.

Across the fields like swallows fly
Sweet thoughts and sad of days gone by;
 From Life's broad highway turned away,
 Like children, Thought and Memory play
Nor heed Time's scythe though grass be high.

Beneath the blue and shoreless sky
Time is but told when seedlings dry
 By Love's light breath are blown, like spray,
 Across the fields.

Now comes the scent of fallen hay,
And flowers bestrew the foot-worn clay,
 And summer breathes a passing sigh
 As westward rolls the day's gold eye,
And Time with Labor ends his day
 Across the fields.

—WALTER CRANE (1845-1915)



CHRONOLOGIC

Composed to text by Choral Arts' 2013 Finding Your Voice poetry contest winner Katy Spencer, *Chronologic* vibrantly and assertively speaks of that never-ceasing, ruthless mistress called 'Time.' As Ms. Spencer deftly articulates, time bends, shapes, and changes all mortal things. One sees similarities to Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Ozymandias* and the eroded statue of the prideful king. Nothing will escape the heavy hand of time, yet Spencer gives a clever caveat: It will hold answers to all things unknown.

Time,
An empty echo of passing life, it is
the past, the present, and the future.
Binding, shaping, changing, it
clings to the chronologic universe.

No length of travel, strife and joy
Will escape its hold,
But, in its purest,
Will forever hold the answers
Of all that is unknown.

—KATY SPENCER (B. 1997)

REMEMBERED LIGHT

Composed for Richard Larson and the Denver ensemble Kantorei, *Remembered Light* is a dramatic narrative that speaks of nature and memory. The poem was scribed by a very young Clark Ashton Smith no older than 19, who later became famous for his authorship of fantasy, horror, and science-fiction short stories. The depth and strangeness of this text is made more so by the notion that one so young would understand the twilight of years and the nature of death. The music uses soundscapes to paint the ever-shifting image of memory, signified by a gentle falling snow. Visions of mountains, clouds, and the flaming sun highlight a journey toward dusk and the growing twilight. All these portray the growing of years and the distant joys and sorrows of life, ever clouding a veiled memory. The visions are broken by the power of surging darkness, yet hope remains, and the gentle falling snow returns unto oblivion.

The years are a falling of snow,
Slow, but without cessation,
On hills and mountains and flowers
and worlds that were;
But snow and the crawling night in which it fell
May be washed away in one swifter hour of flame.
Thus it was that some slant of the sunset
In the chasms of piled cloud –
Transient mountains that made a new horizon,
Uplifting the west to fantastic pinnacles –
Smote warm in a buried realm of the spirit,
Till the snows of forgetfulness were gone.

Bright was the twilight, sharp like ethereal wine
Above, but low in the clefts it thickened,
Dull as with dusker tincture.
Stars that were nearer, more radiant than ours,
Quivered and pulsed in the clear thin gold of the sky.
These things I beheld,
Till the gold was shaken with flight
Of fantastical wings like broken shadows,
Forerunning the darkness;

Till the twilight shivered
with outcry of eldritch voices,
Like pain's last cry ere oblivion.*

—CLARK ASHTON SMITH (1893-1961)

* *Text of the poem as it appears in the choral setting,
modified by the composer.*





TAKE MY HAND

A collaboration between Robert Bode and Eric Barnum, *Take My Hand* was commissioned by Andrew Jacobson and Bellevue Christian High School. Bode's poetry shines forth in its simple vibrancy as it outlines both a single day and an entire life in four short quatrains. Starting at dawn and ending at evening, each step is accompanied by a gracious offering of 'take my hand'. The music once again harkens back to Barnum's Scandinavian roots, specifically Stenhammer, as it uses both warmth of harmony and a tuneful melody to color the pastoral poem. One may even hear an homage to Stenhammer's *I Seraillets Have* in the final moments as the poet boards the old man's boat and disappears toward evening.



Take my hand,
And I will lift you
Across the golden mountains,
Into the morning.

Take my hand,
And when noon comes
We will run to the forest
Where the deer make their nest.

Take my hand,
And we will whisper
With dragonflies
In the quiet afternoon.

Take my hand,
And, together,
We will board the old man's boat
And cross the long slow river,
Toward evening.

—ROBERT BODE (B. 1957)

the artists

Seattle-based **Choral Arts** is an auditioned ensemble led by Artistic Director/Conductor Robert H. Bode. Considered one of the finest ensembles in the country, Choral Arts *inspires, educates, and enriches its community through the transformational power of great choral music performed at the highest artistic level.* Its mission is carried out through three core commitments: to perform high-quality choral music in a way that is transforming and special, commission and record new works by American composers, and offer meaningful education programs. Learn more about Choral Arts at www.choral-arts.org.

Robert Bode, Conductor/Artistic Director, is regarded as one of his generation's most exciting choral conductors. His depth of knowledge, artistic imagination, and passionate music-making has brought him critical praise from around the world. He has been a featured performer at regional and national conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and has been invited to conduct concerts in Russia, China, Mongolia, England, the Czech Republic, Germany, Romania, Poland, and Bulgaria. Bode is on the faculty at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he is the Raymond R. Neevel/Missouri Professor of Choral Music and Director of Choral Activities. In 2007, two powerful forces in choral music came together when Bode was named Conductor and Artistic Director for Choral Arts. Under his direction, Choral Arts has been awarded the prestigious Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence (2010) and won national praise for



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Anneliese Johnson, solo (Track 7)
Emily Herivel, solo (Track 11)
Lee D. Thompson, piano (Tracks 3, 5, 7)

SOPRANO

Gakyung Chung
Marilyn Cleveland
Jessica French
Rebekah Gilmore
Emily Herivel
Anneliese Johnson
Kate Moscato Leen
Melinda Schlimmer

ALTO

Kate Abbott
Kari Frost
Cindy Harris
Rochelle Martin
Ruth Preston
Melanie Stevens
Sara Womack

TENOR

Layne Benofsky
Joe Clime
John Cook
Nicholas Gorne
Tim Morrissey
Gary Panek

BASS

Bill Burcham
Adam Búrdick
Dave Frost
Gabe Lewis-O'Connor
Evan Norberg
Lee Thompson
Philip Tschopp
Lorin Wingate

their two most recent CDs from the American Prize. *Mornings Like This* won the 2010 American Prize for best choral performance and *Shall We Gather at the River: The Choral Music of William Hawley* won second place in the 2013 American Prize for choral performance.

“Bode draws absolutely ravishing and emotionally wrenching singing from [Choral Arts}; their rich smooth sonorities gain a particular ethereal bloom...”

—AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

Eric William Barnum is currently the Director of Choral Music at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh. He holds a DMA in Choral Conducting from the University of Washington, under the direction of Dr. Geoffrey Boers. He has an advanced degree in conducting from Minnesota State University, primary study with Dr. David Dickau, as well as BA degrees in Composition and Vocal Performance from Bemidji State University. He has appeared as a conductor across the United States, and has had the opportunity to work with some of the most innovative minds in the choral field.

Barnum composes for choral ensembles of all types, from professional to youth choirs, and has received numerous awards and prestigious grants such as a Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship and a McKnight Foundation Grant. He has also held residencies with such ensembles as Choral Arts (Seattle, WA), The Rose Ensemble (St. Paul, MN), Kantorei (Denver, CO), Magnum Chorum (Minneapolis, MN), Coro Vocal Artists (Tucson, AZ), as well as with many high schools and collegiate choirs.



BARNUM

credits

LIFE STORIES: THE CHORAL MUSIC OF ERIC WILLIAM BARNUM

CHORAL ARTS • ROBERT BODE, DIRECTOR

Recorded on May 20-23, 2013

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