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Mark Shapiro
Kim and Edward Shiley
Deb Siler
Mr. Kim D. Tomlinson
John Tucker
Laura Ward and David Newmann
Tom Woodward
...and the members of The Crossing

Contributions in memory of Hank Van de Water
Pat and Frank Folk
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Join us in presenting more concerts like this by writing a check, placing it in the envelope provided, and mailing it to us – or, give it to an usher this evening. Alternatively, you may donate online at www.crossingchoir.com.

This evening's concert is being recorded by Paul Vazquez: www.digitalmissiononline.com
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The Crossing will sing the opening concert of Chorus America's National Conference:

this coming Wednesday, 10 June 2009, 7.30pm at St. Peter's Church, 3rd and Pine Streets.
Join us for this free concert, which we will share with The Princeton Singers.

Mark your calendars for next season:

Crossing in Winter: January 3, 2010 (4pm): David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning *The Little Match Girl Passion*

Month of Moderns 2010: a summer festival! June 26 – July 16. Commissioned premieres of David Lang, Paul Fowler, and Lansing McLosky and a collection of some of the most beautiful and thought-provoking music being written today.



THE CROSSING

D O N A L D N A L L Y — C O N D U C T O R

Presents

The Month of Moderns III

Friday, June 5th - 8PM

Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill
8855 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19118

Program

Scenes in America Deserta (1986)

John McCabe

Silence, Heat and Light I

Cycling

Buildings and Works of Man: Cosanti

Pueblo: The Frescoes

Silence, Heat and Light II

Potter's Clay (2007)

Paul Fowler

I saw him standing (2004)

Phillip Moore

Where flames a word

Kile Smith

world premiere: written for The Crossing's Celan Project

Before your late face

Conversations in the Mountains

I know you, you are the deeply bowed

Intermission

Rain and Rush and Rosebush (1991)

Bo Holten

I am the true vine (1996)

Arvo Pärt

Voices of Autumn (1982)

Jackson Hill

Special Thanks

The Artistic Board

Maren Montalbano, Brehm, Jeff Dinsmore, Steven Gearhart, Donald Nally, Susan Polack, Rebecca Siler, Shari Alise Wilson

The Community Board - we welcome these new members!

Beryl B. Byles, Rev. Cindy Jarvis, V. Chapman Smith, M. Kathryn Taylor, Beth Van de Water

We thank the Presbyterian Church of Chestnut Hill – Reverend Cindy Jarvis and Music Director Mark Anderson – for its continuing generosity.

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Tour Resource Consultants, Maury Schulte, owner: www.tourresource.com

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The Aaron Copland Fund for Music

Max Holmes

Jonathan Sprogell and M. Kathryn Taylor

Beth Van de Water

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We thank those who contribute generously to help us bring new music to Philadelphia:

Anne Bancroft

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- III. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.
 IV. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.
 V. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.
 VI. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.
 VII. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.
 VIII. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.
 IX. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: Continue ye in my love.
 X. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.
 XI. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.
 XII. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.
 XIII. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.
 XIV. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.
 - John 15:1-14

Voices of Autumn (Aki no ko-e)

Jackson Hill (b. 1941, Alabama)

Written for: Bowdoin College Choir's annual contemporary music festival, as one of a set of five choral works originating from the composer's time in Japan studying Buddhist liturgical chant. It was first sung in 1985 and a solo-voice version was premiered in 1994 by the Hilliard Ensemble in Amsterdam.

We found it: Like Fowler's *Potter's Clay*, looking for works that combine recognizably Western musical resources with Eastern influences. We were surprised to find how similar in musical gesture Hill's autumn mountain forest is to McCabe's Southwestern America; it seems a perfect bookend to our concert.

Of this work: the composer writes: *Voices of Autumn* "uses several Japanese stylistic devices: a pentatonic (five-note) scale, pentatonic harmonies, absence of harmonic motion and chord progressions, minimal rhythmic forward motion, a sense of suspended time, glissandos, and ornamentation derived from Buddhist chant and ancient Japanese court music." We feel it is a fitting close to our first Month of Moderns, bringing the journey to a pause for now, recognizing the challenges we've faced along the way, being grateful equally for artist and audience, and taking a long, quiet breath into a single note.

*Oku yama ni
 Momiji fumiwake
 Nakushika no
 Koe-kiku-toki zo
 Aki wa kanashiki*

In the mountain's heart
 As I trudge through fallen leaves,
 The cry of a stag
 Haunts the forest with its voice
 In the poignant autumn air

- Sarumaru-dayu, 9th c., trans. by the composer

The Crossing

Karen Blanchard
 Steven Bradshaw
 Maren Montalbano Brehm
 Jeffrey Chapman
 Veronica Chapman-Smith
 Colin Dill
 Jeffrey Dinsmore

Ryan Fleming
 Steven Gearhart
 Chris Hodges
 Heidi Kurtz
 Vincent Metallo
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 Karen Wapner
 Rebecca Whitlow
 Shari Alise Wilson
 Steven Ziegler

Donald Nally, conductor
 John Grecia, accompanist

Notes and Translations

Scenes in America Deserta

John McCabe (b. 1939, England)

Written for: The King's Singers

We found it: searching for works in which voices describe landscapes and also create them. (We're fascinated by the latter and often suspect of the former, but find here, in McCabe's work, a complete ease and confidence with sound that is quite gestural and descriptive yet generates its own emotional environment.)

In this work: McCabe takes six short excerpts from Reyner Banham's classic book *Scenes in America Deserta* that, in his words, "touch on several different points: the nature of the coloring, the silence and the heat, of course, but also the human element in the man-made structure, decorations and pastimes." Banham diverged from his usual role as architectural historian to become an energetic observer of the desert landscape and those that live in it, translating the American Southwest into prose through his extraordinary perception and sensory awareness. McCabe captures the rhythm and feel of Banham's words in a way that allows listeners to feel that they tumble from landscape to landscape, always finding themselves as the object in the midst of the heat and stark splendor.

Silence, heat and light I

Silence, heat and light.

The silence flowed back

like a filling pool ... the air began to feel warm as the sun beat back ... a thin heat-haze began to dance and shimmer ... everything that is not shadow is brilliant incandescent white against the darker mountains behind ...

Cycling

Swinging in wider and wider circles or going head down for the ever-retreating horizon, the salt whispers under one's wheels ... Swooping and sprinting like a skater over the surface of Silurian Lake ...

Buildings and Works of Man: Cosanti

A sequence of small sunken courtyards: some roofed ... others sheltered by overhanging trees which dappled these deep places with patterns of flickering shadow. And everywhere - tinkling bells and tinkling fountains ...

Pueblo: The Frescoes

The frescoes ... had but one subject: water...every image celebrated or craved the giving of water. White-legged figures of gods spilled water from feathered gourds; black pots set upon the ground spewed symmetrical fountains of water; fish spat water, an eagle spat water, two geese spat water, a storm bird spat water, and lightning struck everywhere to celebrate the thunderstorm.

Silence, heat and light II

Color seems to emanate as light throughout the atmosphere...The shadows in the gorge and along the mountain face were an extraordinary blue, a profound, saturated blue undimmed by the whitening corruptions of atmosphere, an utter blue beyond question and almost beyond description...

- *Scenes in America Deserta*, Peter Reyner Banham (1922-1988)

Potter's Clay

Paul Fowler (b. 1978, Wisconsin)

Written for: the tenth anniversary of the Milwaukee Choral Artists, of which the composer's mother is a member.

We found it: looking for works that draw on Eastern influences; specifically, music that employs voices in traditional Western ways, while allowing Eastern philosophies to enter and influence the art.

Of this work: the composer writes, "This mantra is spoken to Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, who vowed to hear the prayers of all sentient beings and postpone his own enlightenment until every being on earth achieved nirvana. In some renderings of Avalokitesvara's story, Amitabha Buddha endows him with eleven heads and one thousand arms, so he may better hear and assist those who suffer. His mantra manifests compassion, good fortune, and purifies negative karma. In this piece the mantra is primarily intoned on *a*, *b*, and *d* [mirroring the three sounds of *Om*]. The turning point of the piece is generated by the simultaneous use of the mantra in both *d* and *e*. The mantra in *e* acts like the outside fear element that often imposes upon pure mind, speech, and body and the result of this is a question that is frequently our greatest downfall: 'What's the future?'"

[Om Mani Padmé Hum]

Life is like a potter's clay
Changing from day to day.
As stars sparkle in the sky
Light and dark go quickly by.
What's the future, no one knows,
So be at peace
With how life goes.

-*Tibetan Tales for Little Buddhas*, Naomi C. Rose

I saw him standing

Philip Moore (b. 1943, England)

Written for: the Vasari Singers (London) to celebrate their 25th anniversary.

We found it: reviewing Moore's works after enjoying singing his moving "Three Prayers of Dietrich Bonhöffer" last April.

In this work: Moore carefully carves a simple motet in a rather traditional musical language from these graphic images of Anne Griffiths, a strikingly bold hymn writer of the late eighteenth century (her words are reincarnated here by the Archbishop of Canterbury). Moore waits to introduce the sopranos into the texture until the words "It will be Oh, such a daybreak," and the music soon after moves into an exhilarating dancelike section of shifting meters in which the composer draws our attention, through rhythm, to the connection between "Rose of Sharon" and "There he stands."

got the idea of basing the whole piece on a simple tune heard somewhere near the end of the piece. It symbolizes the innocence of the young blind girl in the fairytale who, after her four elder brothers have failed miserably in different ways, also goes out into the world to experience very conflicting moods and sentiments. But she does not fail if she follows her intuition and faith." Holten specifies how the choir is to stand in order to heighten the drama of the work; juxtaposing very adult emotions and childish outbursts of fear and frustration, his tune (haunting and beautiful) leads us through a fairy tale that reaches a rather serious conclusion.

Our life is nought but mist and rain,
a long night full of sadness.
Our life is like a rosebush fair
with sunshine and with gladness.

We only think about ourselves,
this truth is known to all men.
Throughout our life a stream of love
creates on earth a heaven.

It's all so mean and petty here
and upside down and inside out.
There happen great deeds far and near
that no one ever hears of.

Deride and scorn, poke fun and mock,
join in the howling laughter.
Trust in yourself and trust in God,
His will be done hereafter.
...day to night, night to day
...and such sweet fragrance from apple orchards

- *The Stone and the Wise Man*, Hans Christian Anderson (trans. By Ingrid Thornton, Julian Thurber, and Bo Holten)

I am the true vine

Arvo Pärt (b. 1935, Estonia)

Written for: the 900th anniversary of the foundation of Norwich Cathedral.

We found it: Looking for quiet, minimal works that would be enhanced by the acoustic of the duomo in Spoleto, Italy.

In this work: Pärt treats the four choral parts (often divided to six) as a single voice, one that spans a great range in pure unisons and the simplest harmonies. Thus, the words read continuously forward, but are at times assembled as such from fragments divided between voices, because Pärt's single voice requires (for example) one syllable to come from above and another to come from below; he hears voices as a universality, drawn from individuality, finding layers of meaning inspired by the text. The work doesn't so much evolve as it exists in time, creating a place for us to contemplate the lessons of joy and love; even so, there is a clear coming together from the abstract (Greater love hath no man...) to the concrete (You are my friends) that anchors this profound musical language.

I. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
II. Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Under the dark trees, there he stands,
there he stands; shall he not draw my eyes?
I thought I knew a little
how he compels, beyond all things, but now
he stands there in the shadows. It will be
Oh, such a daybreak, such bright morning,
when I shall wake to see him
as he is.

He is called Rose of Sharon, for his skin
is clear, his skin is flushed with blood,
his body lovely and exact; how he compels
beyond ten thousand rivals. There he stands,
my friend, the friend of guilt and helplessness,
to steer my hollow body
over the sea.

The earth is full of masks and fetishes,
what is there here for me? are these like him?
Keep company with him and you will know:
no kin, no likeness to those empty eyes.
He is a stranger to them all, great Jesus.
What is there here for me? I know
what I have longed for. Him to hold
me always.

- Rowan Williams, after *Yr Arglwydd Iesu* of Anne Griffiths

Where flames a word

Kile Smith (b. 1956, New Jersey)

Written for: this performance, as part of The Celan Project, which we began with David Shapiro's *It is time*, premiered in January, continued with Kirsten Broberg's *Breathturn* two weeks ago, and conclude tonight with *Where flames a word*.

We found him: through our friends at Piffaro, the Renaissance Band, who invited us to sing the premiere of the large work they commissioned from Kile: *Vespers* (now a CD for sale at intermission!). We premiered *Vespers* in January 2008, recorded it last July, and somewhere in the process, all twenty of us fell in love with him and his music and now we're hopelessly devoted to each other.

In this work: Kile completes our Celan project with the longest of our three commissions, and the only to include a setting of prose (the second movement is one of our favorite Celan texts). Kile's combination of lyric melody and lush, repetitive harmonies guide us through these moving images – "wandering as a loner" in music that marches forward with anticipation, quietly contemplating our lives (through pronouns) on a "walk in the mountains," and searching for meaning in a final, luxurious hymn "where flames a word." It is clear that Kile had *The Crossing* in his ear while writing this work: the close, crunching harmonies so vital to his expressive language, the clear, pure moments of joy, and the quiet, simple exchanges between voice parts seem so natural to us – often sounding effortless. This is not to say the music is easy; it is not. But, a suit made for you by a tailor who knows your every physical attribute and curve is always going to wear easier and look better. That's what this piece is like for us.

1. Before your late face

Before your late face,
a loner
wandering between
nights that change me too,
something came to stand,
which was with us once already, un-
touched by thoughts.

2. Conversation in the Mountains

The stones, too, were silent.

And it was quiet in the mountains where they walked, one and the other.

"You've come a long way, have come all the way here..."

"I have. I've come, like you."

"I know."

"You know. You know and see: The earth folded up here, folded once and twice and three times, and opened up in the middle, and in the middle there is water, and the water is green, and the green is white, and the white comes from even farther up, from the glaciers, and one could say, but one shouldn't, that this is the language that counts here, the green with the white in it, a language not for you and not for me—because, I ask you, for whom is it meant, the earth, not for you, I say, is it meant, and not for me—a language, well, without I and without You nothing but He, nothing but It, you understand, and She, nothing but that."

"I understand, I do. After all, I've come a long way, I've come like you."

"I know."

3. I know you, you are the deeply bowed

(I know you, you are the deeply bowed,

I the transpierced, am subject to you.

Where flames a word, would testify for us both?

You—all, all real. I—all delusion.)

- Paul Celan (1920-1970), 1. and 3. From *Breathturn*, trans. by Pierre Joris, Sun and Moon Press, 1995; 2. From *Collected Prose*, trans. By Rosmarie Waldrop, The Sheep Meadow Press, 1986.

Intermission

Rain and Rush and Rosebush

Bo Holten (b.1948, Denmark)

Written for: Holten's own Danish chamber choir, Ars Nova, and the Norwegian soprano Bente Vist; with whom he performed the piece nearly fifty times in the early 1990s.

We found it: Discovering the complete choral works of Holten, largely through his recordings with BBC Singers, conducted by the composer and featuring many works he wrote for them, which demonstrate an extraordinary ear for choral texture and a great range of emotion. For this reason, we have featured his work all season, singing *First Snow*, and *A time for everything* in January and *In nomine* in the Month of Moderns.

Of this work: the composer writes, "The text was suggested to me by the eminent violin teacher Jakob Thomsen, and for three years the text was on my composing desk. Finally I