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Concert Band

Vox Populi

Andrew Keiser, conductor

Cameron Ryan, graduate conductor

Monday, Oct. 12, 2026, 7:30 p.m.

Grusin Music Hall

Program

Simple Gifts: Four Shaker Songs

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

- I. In Yonder Valley
- II. Dance
- III. Here Take this Lovely flower
- IV. Simple Gifts

Nessum Dorma

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

arr. Jay Bocook (b.1953)

Earth Song

Frank Ticheli

Cameron Ryan, graduate conductor

Of Endless Miles and Empty Rafts...

Michele Fernández (b. 1965)

Program Notes

Simple Gifts: Four Shaker Songs

Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

My work is built from four Shaker melodies—a sensuous nature song, a lively dance tune, a tender lullaby, and most famously, *Simple Gifts*, the hymn that celebrates the Shakers’ love of simplicity and humility. In setting these songs, I sought subtle ways to preserve their simple, straightforward beauty. Melodic freshness and interest were achieved primarily through variations of harmony, of texture, and especially of orchestration.

The first movement is a setting of *In Yonder Valley*, generally regarded to be the oldest surviving Shaker song with text. This simple hymn in praise of nature is attributed to Father James Whittaker (1751-1787), a member of the small group of Shakers who emigrated to America in 1774. My setting enhances the image of spring by turning the first three notes of the tune into a birdcall motive.

In yonder valley there flowers sweet union;

Let us arise and drink our fill.

The winter’s past and the spring appears;

The turtle dove is in our land.

In yonder valley there flows sweet union;

Let us arise, and drink our fill.

The second movement, *Dance*, makes use of a tune from an 1830s Shaker manuscript. Dancing was an important part of Shaker worship, and tunes such as this were often sung by a small group of singers while the rest of the congregation danced.

One interesting feature in my setting occurs near the end of the movement, when the brasses state the tune at one-quarter speed, in counterpoint against the woodwinds who state it at normal speed.

*Virgins cloth'd in a clean white garment,
How they move in a band of love,
Comforts flow in a mighty current,
We shall drink at the fountains above.*

*Yea, we will rejoice with freedom,
In this straight little narrow way,
Here is the fold and the lambs all feeding,
On this green we'll skip and play.*

The third movement is based on a Shaker lullaby *Here Take This Lovely Flower*, found in Dorothy Berliner Commin's extraordinary collection, *Lullabies of the World* and in Daniel W. Patterson's monumental collection *The Shaker Spiritual*. This song is an example of the phenomenon of the gift song, music received from spirits by Shaker mediums while in trance. Although the Shakers practiced celibacy, there were many children in their communities, including the children of recent converts as well as orphans whom they took in. Like many Shaker songs, this lullaby embodies the Shakers' ideal of childlike simplicity.

*Here take this lovely flower
Thy mother sent to thee,
Cull'd from her lovely bower
Of sweet simplicity.*

*O place it near thy bosom
And keep it pure and bright,
For in such lovely flowers
The angels take delight.*

The finale is a setting of the Shakers' most famous song, *Simple Gifts*, sometimes attributed to Elder Joseph Bracket (1797-1882) of the Alfred, Maine community, and also said (in Lebanon, New York, manuscript) as having been received from a Negro spirit at Canterbury, New Hampshire, making *Simple Gifts* possibly a visionary gift song. It has been used in hundreds of settings, most notably by Aaron Copland in the brilliant set of variations which conclude his *Appalachian Spring*. Without ever quoting him, my setting begins at Copland's doorstep, and quickly departs. Throughout its little journey, the tune is never abandoned, rarely altered, always exalted.

*'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free;
'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be;
And when we found ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.*

*When true simplicity is gained,
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight,
'Til by turning. turning we come round right.*

Program note by composer

Nessum Dorma

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924)

arr. Jay Bocook (b.1953)

Nessun dorma (None shall sleep) is an aria from the final act of Giacomo Puccini's opera *Turandot*, and is one of the best-known tenor arias in all opera. It is sung by Calaf, *il principe ignoto* (the unknown prince), who falls in love at first sight with the beautiful but cold Princess Turandot. However, any man who wishes to wed Turandot must first answer her three riddles; if he fails, he will be beheaded.

In the act before this aria, Calaf has correctly answered the three riddles put to all of Princess Turandot's prospective suitors. Nonetheless, she recoils at the thought of marriage to him. Calaf offers her another chance by challenging her to guess his name by dawn. (As he kneels before her, the *Nessun dorma* theme makes a first appearance, to his words, "Il mio nome non sai!") If she does so, she can execute him; but if she does not, she must marry him. The cruel and emotionally cold princess then decrees that none of her subjects shall sleep that night until his name is discovered. If they fail, all will be killed.

As the final act opens, it is now night. Calaf is alone in the moonlit palace gardens. In the distance, he hears Turandot's heralds proclaiming her command. His aria begins with an echo of their cry and a reflection on Princess Turandot.

Program note from the Wind Repertory Project

Nessun dorma! Nessun dorma!

None shall sleep, None shall sleep!

Tu pure, o Principessa

Even you, oh Princess,

Nella tua fredda stanza

In your cold room,

Guardi le stelle che tremano

Watch the stars, That tremble

D'amore e di speranza!

with love and with hope.

Ma il mio mistero è chiuso in me

But my secret is hidden within me,

Il nome mio nessun saprà!

My name no one shall know,

No, no, sulla tua bocca lo dirò

No... no... On your mouth, I will tell it,

Quando la luce splenderà!

When the light shines.

Ed il mio bacio scioglierà

And my kiss will dissolve

Il silenzio che ti fa mia!

the silence that makes you mine!

(Il nome suo nessun saprà

(No one will know his name

E noi dovrem, ahimè! Morir! Morir!)

and we must, alas, die.)

Dilegua, o notte! Tramontate, stelle!

Vanish, o night! Set, stars!

Tramontate, stelle! All'alba vincerò!

Set, stars! At dawn, I will win!

Vincerò!

I will win!

Vincerò!

I will win!

Lyrics by Giacomo Puccini

Earth Song

Frank Ticheli

Earth Song for concert band is the grandchild of *Sanctuary* for concert band. Almost as soon as I completed *Sanctuary* I became intrigued by the idea of making a choral version of at least part of the work. Within the same year, I realized this goal, inventing a poem that reflected the music's poignant lyricism, fitting the rhythmic stresses and melodic contour of *Sanctuary's* melody. Thus, *Earth Song* for chorus came to be.

Six years after composing *Sanctuary*, in 2012, I received an email from Frank Troyka, director of bands at Berkner High School in Richardson, Texas, inquiring if I might consider making a concert band version of *Earth Song* for one of his colleagues. The irony of his request was not lost on either of us, but we both agreed that, in a sense, this full circle back to the music's concert band origins would allow me to create a grandchild possessing the genetic strengths of both its ancestors: the rich textured lyricism and more concise nature of its choral forebear, combined with the wider color palette and expressive power of its concert band forebear.

Thus, *Earth Song* for concert band was born: a more concise (and less technically demanding) descendant of *Sanctuary*.

*Sing, be, live, see
This dark stormy hour
The wind, it stirs
The scorched Earth cries out in vain*

*Oh war and power, you blind and blur
The torn heart cries out in pain*

*But music and singing have been my refuge
And music and singing shall be my light*

*A light of song, shining strong
Hallelujah, hallelujah*

*Through darkness and pain and strife
I'll sing, I'll be, live, see*

Peace

Program note by composer

Of Endless Miles and Empty Rafts...

Michele Fernández (b. 1965)

Throughout time and regardless of origin, immigrants have shown a spiritual courage and resolve to survive that has found countless families suffering perilous journeys in search of safety. Many have been lost along the way. As a child of Cuban parents

who fled oppression (leaving much behind to build a new life), my respect and empathy for all immigrants runs deep. Although my parents' (still traumatic) exoduses were not by sea, several family members' and friends' journeys were. Throughout my life I have heard stories of near losses and rafts washing ashore, empty. I still recall the feelings since childhood—wondering who they were, and what happened to them.

This piece is in no way intended as a contemporary statement, rather as an empathic look at humanity's struggles to protect innocent families throughout history, and a tribute to my own ancestors' courage. Many of us are descents of immigrants at some point in our deep histories, regardless of era, or origin. During my 30 years as a public school teacher in Miami, I had countless (precious) students who suffered trauma from the dangers of their immigrant journey, and so this original composition honors displaced souls from all eras and walks of life, irrespective of hemisphere—who have fled homes, to anywhere, in search of safety for themselves and their children. The piece is written using two authentic Afro-Cuban forms: *Guaguancó* and *Son-Montuno*. In this work, many authentic patterns are woven into the fabric of the winds as well. Each brief section represents elements of an immigrant's story.

1. Opening Chorale: Depicts a treacherous journey, for example, as seas toss about a small raft and its occupants. At the end of the chorale, the listener can almost visualize someone falling overboard and descending into the depths with others still in the raft, crying out with reaching hands as rain and darkness beat down.

2. Guaguancó (3/2 Rumba Clave): A seamless flashback to a memory; this dignified soul at home, living peacefully.

3. Son Montuno (2/3 Son Clave): Still a flashback—urgency sets in at home as turmoil intensifies into a pursuit, and the courageous decision to flee from danger comes to the forefront. The piece returns to the present (remaining souls), and the intense finale depicts the will of the human spirit to survive and carry on to thrive and contribute, now in their new home—in honor of their lost loved ones' memories and courage.

Program note by composer

Personnel

Michele Fernández

Michele Fernández is a published composer, active guest clinician, adjudicator and performer. Her jazz and symphonic compositions have premiered at Midwest, CBDNA, IAJE, MEA's and All-State/Regional venues as well as professional venues. She frequently serves as a guest clinician/conductor for All-State groups and Regional Honors jazz/symphonic groups. She has appeared as a Midwest Clinic lecturer ('07 / '16), JEN '22 and various State MEA's. She is a Conn-Selmer and Hal-Leonard sponsored clinician, as well as a freelance guest clinician/conductor for universities and districts across the country. Fernández recently retired from teaching in Miami after 30 years, where (among other teaching positions) her Miami Senior High School ensembles earned top honors/gained international acclaim. Her groups have been selected for Midwest Clinic (Chicago '93 & '98), IAJE (Boston '94 & NYC '97), Montreux Jazz Festival (Switzerland '96), FMEA (Tampa '94 & '97) and various national publications.

Frank Ticheli

Frank Ticheli (b. 21 January 1958, Monroe, Louisiana.) is an American composer and conductor. Ticheli joined the faculty of the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music in 1991, where he served as professor of composition until 2023. From 1991 to 1998, Ticheli was composer-in-residence of the Pacific Symphony, and he still enjoys a close working relationship with that orchestra and their music director, Carl St. Clair. Ticheli is well known for his works for concert band, many of which have become standards in the repertoire. In addition to composing, he

has appeared as guest conductor of his music at Carnegie Hall, at many American universities and music festivals, and in cities throughout the world, including Schladming, Austria, at the Mid-Europe Music Festival; London and Manchester, England, with the Meadows Wind Ensemble; Singapore, with the Singapore Armed Forces Central Band; and numerous cities in Japan, with the Bands of America National Honor Band.

Ticheli is the winner of the 2006 NBA/William D. Revelli Memorial Band Composition Contest for his Symphony No. 2. Other awards for his music include the Charles Ives and the Goddard Lieberman Awards, both from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Walter Beeler Memorial Prize, and First Prize awards in the Texas Sesquicentennial Orchestral Composition Competition, Britten-on-the-Bay Choral Composition Contest, and Virginia CBDNA Symposium for New Band Music.

Cameron Ryan, graduate conductor

Cameron Ryan is a master's student in wind conducting at CU Boulder. Prior to starting his degree in conducting, Ryan graduated with a master's in saxophone performance from CU Boulder where he was active in the saxophone studio and band department. He was a member of the Cooper quartet and the Graduate Saxophone Octet and participated in North American Saxophone Alliance conferences as both a chamber musician, masterclass participant, and presenter. He also worked closely with the Golden Buffalo Marching Band and Buff Band. Before moving to Colorado, Ryan graduated with degrees in music education and saxophone performance from the University of Arkansas where he was a member of the Razorback Marching Band, Tau Beta Sigma and the Arkansas Saxophone Studio.

Concert Band

Flute

Avram Filipiak
Evey Thacker
Tenley Hollman
Anisha Kashyap
Chloe Kowalczyk
Hannah Vogel
Khiana McCarty
Kristina Adams
Laina Eskins
Lana Novogoratz
Sania Powell
Stella Goltzman
Stephanie Avelar
Tanyah Prezkuta

Oboe

Bodie Armstrong
Nathan Lucas

Bassoon

Amelia Dundon
Kody Fung
Madi Roberts

Clarinet

Alyssa Cheeseman
Eden Soasey
Francis Francavilla

Nathaniel Francis
Riley Laguana
Ryan Bonner
Elaine Keiser
Theodore Harris
Tricia Lee
Andrew Carson
James Bramley

Bass clarinet

Campbell Stoughton
Swaraj Patnaik

Alto saxophone

Colby Muchlinski
Emily Whiteley
Jackson Buchanan
Kazu Iwasa
Parker Hay
Shai Moseley
Stephen Tucci

Tenor saxophone

Diego Willebeek-LeMair
Ian Lenick

Baritone Saxophone

Benjamin Rybnicek

Trumpet

Aubrey Riehl
Carter Jenson
Christian Raya
Diego Ayala
Kaitlyn Brown
Kyra Larivee
Lenyx Nevin
Logan Hernacki
Xander Dubois

Horn

Alexandra Neil
Bennett Slade
Noelle Garcia

Trombone

Angel Bustillos
Alex Weeks
Andrew Johnston
Ashley Stuhlsatz
Cooper keene
Jason Born
Owen Jensen
Roman Dorothy
Tian Klomp Znidarsic
Benji Archer
Alex Chen

Euphonium

Anna Simmons
Autumn Dunlap
Jacob Zara
Kieran Johnson
Kieran Ulbee
Sydnie Notter
Zayden Lee

Tuba

Erich Brady
Mason Boeff

Percussion

Basil Solovyev
Ben Williams
Elizabeth Senabre
Tyler Moseley
Victoria Shook
William Jackson
Deklan Brimhall

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