



An American Celebration

Presented by the

Willamette
Master
Chorus



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Willamette Master Chorus

Dr. Wallace Long, Jr.

Conductor

Sophia Kidder

Accompanist

Royal Norquist

Assistant Accompanist

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An American Celebration

"An American Celebration," some might say, would seem to indicate the jubilation over the victorious conclusion of the Gulf War. Certainly all of us rejoice that the nations of the world, through the United Nations, agreed to stop aggression and cruelty; and we further rejoice that American soldiers are returning safely to home, friends, and family.

But Some of the extremes of celebration may remind us of the story told by Nancy Mitford, shortly after the conclusion of World War II.

"Lady Cunard was a guest at one of the first balls to be given in London after World War II had ended. Encouraged by limitless champagne, patricians of English high society danced away the night in elegant surroundings. A fellow guest, the diarist Henry ("Chips") Channon, gestured toward the glittering assembly and said, 'This is what we fought the war for.' 'Oh, do you mean they are all Poles?' inquired Lady Cunard."

In any case, however, we chose the title "An American Celebration" long before the Gulf War was more than a gleam in the eyes of the generals. We wished to celebrate, not military victory, but the quality of American life and especially the American composers and arrangers who celebrate it through music.

The word "celebration," anyway, means much more than the rejoicing commonly associated with it. It refers primarily to public ceremony, especially religious, to solemn rites, to public honors and proclamation.

So an important quality of American life that we would like to celebrate is its essential religiousness. Most of the early settlers came to America for the right to worship as they wished. These early Christians celebrated the resurrection of Christ as the guarantee of their own, as seen in Billings "Easter Anthem." They also celebrated a strong sense of fellowship and purpose - "Come, We That Love The Lord" and "I'm Glad I Am A Shaker." The common destiny was heaven and resurrection, not to avoid present responsibilities, but as the fitting culmination of a life of service. John Donne, however, was a little fearful that the grace of God would not extend to him unless through repentance Christ's blood "sealed" his "pardon."

But let us not forget that these Christians also celebrated in an enthusiastic, even ecstatic manner. Even in the midst of tribulation and toil, they sang much of joy; "Ye Followers of the Lamb" appropriately expresses the fervor of these people, who truly wanted "All That Hath Life and Breath" to praise the Lord: "Alleluia!"

Above all, religious celebration requires the devotion of the center of love and being - the heart, truly "The Best of Rooms."

But the early Americans were not functioning in a vacuum; they brought with them "a great cloud of witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) from the Old World and the Old Testament: Nicodemus, Samson, Ezekiel, even a vast assemblage who celebrated that all their trials would "soon be over."

Beyond religion, Americans celebrate the land itself - its size and beauty, as seen in "Shenandoah." We celebrate the romance of exploration and distance, even when it leads to separation - "He's Gone Away" - or temporary liaisons - "Blow the Candles Out."

Americans also celebrate a vitality which penetrates almost every aspect of life, symbolized by Stephen Foster in "Camptown Races": "Gon to run all night, gon to run all day," and by the circus, with parades of horses, performers, clowns - all pictured in Charles Ives' "Circus Band."

Finally, Aaron Copland, the quintessential American Composer, expresses the celebration of almost all that enters the American experience: the living, growing, labor, sharing, and loving that form "The Promise of Living" in these United States of America.

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Program

Early Expressions of Faith

There is a powerful stream from the Old World, Africa, and the Protestant northern Europe (chiefly Calvinist, Anabaptist, and Separatist rather Lutheran) in American folk music. The earliest form would be "lining out" where a "precentor" lined out each line of text to be repeated by the congregation. This influence may still be detected in Amish, Scottish, Baptist, and Afro-American heritage singing.

Easter Anthem

William Billings
(1746-1800)

Arranged by Carl Johnson

Dissatisfied with the slow-paced psalm tunes used in New England, William Billings attempted to write "fuguing pieces" which were not real fugues, but merely crude attempts at imitative counterpoint. His music was used by the troops in the Revolutionary War. He was the first native American to make a profession of composing music.

Come, We That Love The Lord

Text by Isaac Watts

Robert Lowry
(1826-1899)

Arranged by Paul Martin

In England, Isaac Watts was the first hymn writer to deliver the congregation from the limitations of metrical psalms through original compositions dealing with current concerns. The arranger of this hymn-anthem - Paul Martin - is a Salem resident, past member of the Willamette Master Chorus, and present director of the Salem Community Chorus.

Ye Followers of the Lamb

Shaker Song

Arranged by Edwin Earle Ferguson

The Shakers (The United States Society of True Believers in Christ's Second Appearing) was one of the first of the wholly American sects that developed in the New World. The foundress, Ann Lee (1736-1784) believed that she was the female incarnation of Jesus Christ. Her followers were celibate, temperate, ascetic, frugal, and noted for simplicity in life and design. They were given to expressing the joy and fervor of their faith in ecstatic song and dance, incorporating the influences of both American Indian and Afro-American rhythm. Their quivering and shaking resulted in the sobriquet "Shaker."

Contemporary Expressions of Faith

At The Round Earth's Imagined Corners

Williametta Spencer

Poem by John Donne

Donne was never a very secure believer in his eternal destiny and was obsessed by thoughts of death. In this "Holy Sonnet VII" he grandly envisions the last trumpet of God and the general resurrection of the dead. At the end of the octave (first eight lines), however, he suddenly considers his own position and asks God to wait, since he feels unprepared for the final judgement. The last two lines must be read ironically: repentance is "good" because Christ has seal'd Donne's pardon with his blood. Because Spencer is a professor of music in Southern California.

The Best of Rooms

Randall Thompson

Poem by Robert Herrick

(1899-1984)

Randall Thompson was a Harvard graduate who taught at Harvard, Princeton, the University of California, and Philadelphia's Curtis Institute. He is best known for his choral music, which by its shape and color is graceful and rewarding to sing. It is prevailingly diatonic.

All That Hath Life And Breath Praise Ye The Lord

Rene Claussen

Text adapted from Psalms 96 and 22

, Soprano

The music of this composition has a lilting triple rhythm, which slowly evolves into a meditative petition. Just before the final return to lyrical jubilation, the music presents an aleatory (chance) section, in which the sopranos are allowed to sing a sequence of three melodic themes, in any order, exuberantly with rhythmic freedom. Rene Claussen is a professor of music in Texas.

Spirituals

Negro Spirituals may represent the New World's greatest gift to religious vocal music. The three selections the Chorus sings show the genius of a people who could fashion glowing affirmations of faith from the simplest materials.

Witness

Traditional Spiritual

Arranged by Jack Halloran

All My Trials

Bahamian Spiritual

Arranged by Norman Luboff

Ezekiel Saw De Wheel

Traditional Spiritual

Arranged by William L. Dawson

William Dawson has been a leading American black composer and conductor, especially at the Tuskegee Institute.

Intermission

Refreshments will be served in the Gallery

Folksongs of the People

Many of the melodies and even the words of American folk songs were brought over with the early settlers, some runaway indentured servants of British and Scotch-Irish ancestry. They settled in the mountains of Appalachia and sang plaintive songs accompanied by hand harps.

Shenandoah American Folksong
Arranged by James Erb

Shenandoah is an example of a sea chanty, like *Blow the Candles Out*. But this is a "capstan" chanty, sung when the crew turned the capstan to haul in a heavy line, often to weigh anchor and set out to sea. The theme of a longing for home and family is a familiar one.

He's Gone Away Mountain Ballad
Arranged by Ron Nelson

Sung by the women of the Chorus
The piano accompaniment uses broken chords to simulate a harp.

Blow the Candles Out Sea Chanty
Arranged by Michael Richardson

Sung by the men of the chorus.
This is an example of a "foc'sle" chanty, where the sailors gathered off duty to sing of home and to brag of powers with wine and women.

Camptown Races Stephen Foster
(1826-1864)
Arranged by Jack Halloran

Although *Camptown Races* sounds like a folk song, it was the creation of a single individual, Stephen Foster, who has been called America's Minstrel. Foster so absorbed the native influences around him that his songs reflected a folk flavor, as well as the character of the composer.

An American Celebration

Circus Band Charles Ives
(1874-1954)

Arranged by Alexander Dashnaw

Four hands piano accompaniment by Sophia Kidder and Royal Norquist

Charles Ives anticipated many of the innovations seen in later American music, abandoning traditional harmony, tonality, and rhythm in favor of discords, polyrhythms and polytonality, almost all of it before 1928.

Ives stayed in the insurance business most of his life, insisting that he was an amateur composer, never trying to have his works published or performed.

The Promise of Living Aaron Copland
from "The Tender Land"
(1900-1990)

Piano duet accompaniment by Sophia Kidder and Royal Norquist

Some debate whether Aaron Copland or Charles Ives is America's greatest composer. But without doubt Copland is the one who established American music as an art respected throughout the world.

He is probably best known for *Fanfare for the Common Man* and *Appalachian Spring*, for which he received the Pulitzer Prize in 1944.

The Willamette Master Chorus especially appreciates the words of *The Promise of Living*:

"O let us sing our song,
And let our song be heard.
Let's sing our song with our hearts,
And find a promise in that song.
The promise of living.
The promise of growing.
The promise of ending is labor and sharing and loving."

WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS

Scholarship Program

The **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS SCHOLARSHIP** has been established to assist talented choral singers in obtaining a university education. This scholarship is in the amount of up to \$2000 awarded as \$500 per year for up to four consecutive years. The following criteria will be considered in the selection of students to be awarded this scholarship.

1. Selection is to be made on the basis of auditions held by the Willamette University music faculty in conjunction with other music scholarships regularly awarded through the university.
2. The recipients must be admitted as regular students to Willamette University. The award will be applicable to tuition and fees at Willamette University.
3. The recipients must participate in the choral music program of the university.
4. The recipients must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0.
5. The recipients may be asked to participate in one **WMC** concert in each academic year for which they receive the scholarship.
6. The recipients may be asked attend a fund raising event for the **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS SCHOLARSHIP** in each academic year for which they receive the scholarship.

The first award of the **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS SCHOLARSHIP** will be for the 1991-1992 academic year. To facilitate this an annual fund raising event will be held in the spring in addition to other solicitations to be made.

Funds for the **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS SCHOLARSHIP** will be segregated from the general fund of the **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS** and administered by the funding committee of the **WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS**.

Thank You

Our gratitude is extended to those whose financial support has helped the Willamette Master Chorus in its efforts to present fine choral music to the Salem community.

PATRONS

Ed and Karen Jensen

CONTRIBUTORS

Erik and Carol Wood

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our grateful appreciation is offered to all who have assisted in the presentation of this concert. The following organizations have been particularly helpful.

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A special note of thanks is offered to **Eola Hills Winery** who hosted our first auction to establish the Willamette Master Chorus Scholarship. The successful raising of initial funds to sponsor this scholarship was due in large part to the outstanding support provided by Eola Hills Winery.

Willamette Master Chorus

Soprano

Gretchen Bauer
Connie Bresee
Eris Caulkins
Molly Christensen
Anita Douglass
Mary Ann Ellis
Ginger Frake
Mary Guillen
Ellen Handler
Dee Iltis
Caren Jensen
Lynnette Lang
Delia Miller
Ann Papworth
Barbara Patterson
Rosalie Smith
Dorothy Stewart
Barbara Tallman
Shirley Tucker

Alto

Judie Abrahamson
Carol Ann Armstrong
Glenda Betts
Glenda Blanchard
Mary Ann Cichon
Marilyn Conover
Virginia Corrie-Cozart
Judith Edwards-Schaub
Mary French
Karen Jensen
Garnet Long
Susie McKinnon
Esther Reinecke
Mary Jean Sandall
Timothe Seelbach
Betty Shamberger
Roberta Stark
Marlinda Stearns
Betsy Steinberg
Jan Whitty
Rebecca Warner Woodcock
Sharon Young

Tenor

Richard Caulkins
David Clark
Ken Ellis
Jeff Fowler
Robin Jams
Jack Just
Joe Kuehn
Dennis Leffler
Jon Manning
Alden Moberg
Royal Norquist
Ron Peters
Bill Power
Scott Reichlin
Christopher Silva
Doug Wadkins
Mike Whalen
Mike Whitty
Erik Wood

Bass

Don Alrick
Bob Bain
Russ Christensen
John Eastman
Patton Echols
Todd Enger
David Hulse
Bruce McDonald
Dan Miller
Roy Norquist
Dean Orton
David Patch
Ron Stenson
Paul Tanksley
Raymond Utterback
Jeff Waltz

Accompanist

Sophie Kidder

WILLAMETTE MASTER CHORUS

The choir was established as a joint effort by the Salem community, *Willamette University*, and a grant from the *Lutheran Fine Arts Council* to develop an organization devoted to excellence in choral music. After six years as the **Willamette University-Community Choir**, the organization has become the **Willamette Master Chorus**, still maintaining a close affiliation with Willamette University.

Members, now 80 strong, are drawn from the ranks of both professional and non-professional musicians in the greater Salem area. Concert literature is chosen from master-works from the Renaissance through the 20th Century.

Additional concerts in the 1990-91 season have included a performance of *Messiah* with the *Willamette Community Orchestra* and a program of **Opera Choruses & Other Classics**. The Chorus was also invited to perform as part of a Christmas concert at *Morningside United Methodist Church*. **An American Celebration** is the final performance of our 1990-1991 season.

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