Cantamus

SOUNDTRACK: ONE DAY IN MY BIG LIFE

MWACDA Regional Conference
Omaha, NE
Friday, February 9, 2024

Dr. Jennifer Rodgers, director
Ian Lewis, collaborative pianist
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Magnificat Quarti Toni (excerpt)...............................Music by Giovanni Perluigi da Palestrina (c. 1525 – 1594)
Text and arrangement (2023), Jennifer Rodgers
Laura Toennies & Anna Spahn, soloists


The Words We Need (national premiere) (2021).................................................................Jodi Goble
Text by members of Cantamus
Carmen Chan, Claire Hillebrand, Madison Mayfield, Lottie Peterson,
Elliana Fahey, Addison Salski, Kaitlin Tjostem, Meredith Tigges, soloists

Earthly Light (2000)..................................................................................................................Moira Smiley
George Work, cello improvisation

Hurricane (US premiere) (2023).................................................................Katerina Gimon
George Work, cello improvisation
Ian Lewis & Jemma Bullock, percussion

The Day is Done (national premiere) (2021)..........................................................Brad Burrill

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ABOUT CANTAMUS

Cantamus is a divisi, treble ensemble created in 2000 and one of four major choral ensembles at Iowa State University. Singers range from first years to graduate students and come from many fields of study across campus. In the audition process, students invited to Cantamus will have shown rhythmic embodiment, style interpretation, and willingness to explore a range of timbre, in addition to sight-reading and tonal memory skills. They all share an enthusiasm for new and challenging repertoire, along with a love for adventurous programming. The ensemble has received invitations to give solo performances for the 2004, 2010, and now 2024 North Central ACDA Conferences, the 2004 National MENC/NAfME Convention, and the 2013 and 2017 National ACDA Conferences. Recent commissions include works by Jodi Goble, Brad Burrill, Pietro Ferrario, Ko Matsushita, Levente Gyöngyösi, Abbie Betinis, Eric Barnum, and Nathaniel Adams.
This program follows an individual, a “Cantamuun,” through a day that is ordinary and extraordinary at once. Ordinary routines – the setting of intentions in the morning, heading out to take on the world with confidence, and the self-care needed throughout to maintain one’s balance – can require extraordinary discipline. We celebrate those daily victories and struggles – the metaphorical storm of life. Then, in this wildly extraordinary day, our Cantamuun encounters an actual storm (a hurricane, in fact) that asks them to wrestle with more global concerns.

**Magnificat Quarti Toni**

Cantamuun wakes to a morning soundscape and takes a moment to set their intentions. The music is taken from one of Palestrina’s many settings of the *Magnificat*. The words were inspired from various *Matins* (morning) prayers using a combination of English and Latin. The improvised nature sounds are created by members of the choir using a loop pedal.

O Spirit, move me but let my heart be calm.  
Mend me from the day before and keep me free from harm.  
*Dirige viam, sileas cor meam* (guide the way, quiet my heart)  
Set my intention and let me walk with grace.  
Show me the ways of kindness. Give me strength and peace.  
*Dirige viam, sileas cor meam* (guide the way, quiet my heart)  
Rejoice my spirit and be in everything.  
Give me conviction and set my soul to sing.  
*Et exultavit spiritus meus* (My spirit rejoices)  

- Jennifer Rodgers with inspiration from *Matins* prayers and the *Magnificat*

**W.I.T.C.H.**

Putting on their public face, Cantamuun steps out as a “Woman In Total Control of Herself.” This song first appeared on TikTok in July 2022, where 40 million views launched it into full form.

Rumor on the street is that her apples are delicious  
The jury said she’s charming, but her exes say she’s wicked  
I swear to God, I saw her howling at the sky  
She ain’t out to get you, but she’s better on your side  
And she don’t wanna be anybody else  
She’s a woman in total control of herself  
It’s such a wonder to be under her spell  
What a woman, in total control of herself  
Villainous kitty queen, she’s got tricks up her sleeve  
And I got a few up mine  
She said, “Am I bad to the bone ‘cause I get what I want?”  
Mama said it ain’t no crime (ah!)  

Come out and play, it’s fun in the dark  
Tell me, “Why you’re so scared of a woman in charge?”  
Baby, don’t run, you’re breaking my heart  
Tell me, “Why you’re so scared of a woman in charge?”  

- Devon Cole

**The Words We Need**

After the rush, Cantamuun takes a moment of reflection to breathe and encounter feelings of anxiety. This piece was commissioned by Cantamus from Jodi Goble as we navigated the first return to campus under COVID-19 protocols. Rather than finding an existing text, Cantamus singers were asked to provide words they needed to hear or those they longed to say. Jodi compiled these lyrics from their responses. We gave an on-campus premiere of the piece in September 2021.

[[inhale-exhale]]
Take a deep breath. Let it out.  
You belong. You are wanted.  
I know things are tough but you are enough.  
You’re stronger than you think you are.  
You matter more than you think you do.  
If I ever lost you, I don’t know what I’d do.  
Take a deep breath. Let it out.  
Be still, be gentle, be grateful.  
Don’t be afraid, seek out the truth, remember to breathe.  
I miss you. I love you. I’m proud of you.  
You can lean on me. I will never leave you.
You can come to me with anything. We’ll get through this together. Take a deep breath. Let it out.
- Members of Cantamus in Fall 2020

**Earthly Light**
Composer Moira Smiley describes this piece as “a sonic picture of the moment just before a midsummer afternoon storm.” A clinic with Moira in Spring 2023 inspired the opening soundscape of this concert and the use of a loop pedal for vocals.

The heat leans down over us out of the dark July sky.
The air that is bristling with lightning is pregnant and shy.
Rising, bursting, building with all earthly light.

Swelling with droplets of life for the soil that is dry.
The Earth is so heavy with fruits and tall grasses that sigh.
Rising, bursting, building with all earthly light.
- Moira Smiley

**Hurricane**
Canadian composer Katerina Gimon is a rising star in choral music. “Hurricane” is the opening movement of a major, environmentally-inspired choral cycle for SSAA choir, percussion, and cello. Each movement centers around the question, “If the earth could sing, what would it tell us?” and features the work of Canadian poet Lauren Peat. Mirroring the progression of a storm, the music (and the singers) “spiral and grow into a powerful, rhythmic fury and ultimately enter the eye of the storm.” *(See text on the next page).*

**The Day is Done**
At the end of this ordinary, wildly extraordinary day, our Cantamus reflects on their big life and, through music and literature, takes steps to sustain them for the next day. Composer Brad Burrill took eight years to create this piece, allowing it to transform in step with his own life. Cantamus premiered the piece at Iowa State in Spring 2023.

The day is done, and the darkness falls from the wings of Night,
As a feather is wafted downward from an eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o’er me that my soul cannot resist:

A feeling of sadness and longing, that is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only as the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem, some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling, and banish the thoughts of day.

Read from some humbler poet, whose songs gushed from (their) heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer, or tears from the eyelids start;

Who, through long days of labor, and nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in (their) soul the music of wonderful melodies.

Then read from the treasured volume the poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet the beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music, and the cares that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the (nomads), and as silently steal away.
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES

HURRICANE:

come together
please

come
TOGETHER——

SOLITARY SPEAKER:

wait winds
please
where did we
come from?

come don't you know
winds
have no home?
always

deported from the place
we begin
always

together we were made to
come now
no time
to wait

we were made to
give up let go
move on

come with us
now NOW no time
to wait

we need an eye
to see
through

I!
I!

now COME come
with us wait PLEASE NO
time to make contact
I!! I!!

with the world

other to bodies
of water

scream the day

WAIT PLEASE

(what we’re seeing are
tropical depressions
coveting)
(what we’re seeing
is what we’re seeing is
what we’re seeing is

a tropical storm
moving toward the coast)

(only a question of—
time)

(stand-by) (stand-by)

(do you need me?)

(can you hear me?)

(there are
true power—
lines so many
without

power

so much
so much

destruction)

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SOPRANO
Rachel Adamson, Interior Design, Linn-Mar High School
Erin Barnes, Kinesiology, Pre-Health and Pre-PT, Ames High School
Ashley Beagle, Cybersecurity Engineering, South Central Calhoun High School
Julia Blumhagen, Animal Science, Lyons Township High School
* Sophie Byroade, English, Center Point - Urbana High School
AnaBella Gracia Christianson, Animal Science, Mason City High School
Carly Dolan, Business, Gilbert High School
Mizzan Dollisso, Psychology, Ames High School
◊ Elliana Fahey, Genetics, Belle Plaine High School
Nina Fontanella, Environmental Science, Hopkins High School
Bryna Gloeckner, Chemistry, Linn Mar High School
◊ Grace Hagedorn, Biology, Ankeny High School
Claire Hillebrand, Performing Arts & Public Relations, Western Dubuque High School
Madeline Hotham, Elementary Education, Batavia High School
Anna Huetter, Anthropology, Norwalk High School
Sydney Hyzy, Civil Engineering, Glenbard South High School
Taylor Jeffery, Environmental Engineering, St. Michael-Albertville High School
Ashley Kelley, Accounting, Iowa Virtual Academy
Emmalea Kling, Political Science, Criminal Justice, North Polk High School
Megan Lillemoen, Actuarial Science, Stillwater High School
Madeline Medvec, Meteorology, Lincoln High School
Alyssa Jane Olson, Political Science, Gilbert High School
Elizabeth Quam, Biochemistry, Mount Vernon High School
◊ Anna Spahn, Healthcare Management, Wahlert Catholic High School
Sophia Strathearn, Apparel Merchandising and Design, Iowa City High School
Meredith Tidges, Biology, Bishop Garrigan High School
Kaitlin Tjostem, Animal Ecology, Greene County High School
* Laura Ann Toennies, Kinesiology, Belle Plaine High School

ALTO
Hailey Akinsola, Technical Communications and Computer Science, Johnston High School
◊ Thea Alex, Biology, Urbandale High School
Keely Bell, Mechanical Engineering, Falconer Middle/High School
Averi Bolar, Psychology, Marshalltown High School
Jemma Bullock, Architecture, Ankeny High School
Anna Campbell, Industrial Design, Homeschooled
◊ Carmen Chan, Psychology, Linn-Mar High School
Ava Ciavarelli, Event Management, Mason City High School
Lilyann Downard, Aerospace Engineering, Central Lyon Senior High School
Marie Hohisel, Interior Design, Joliet West High School
Mallory Homzik, Architecture, Roseville Area High School
Amanda Hulstein, Event Management, MOC-Floyd Valley High School
Madison Mayfield, English and Music (Voice), China Spring High School
◊ Kalam Mester, Animal Ecology, Davenport Central High School
* Lydia Papiboune, Psychology, Gilbert High School
Kathleen Pelzer, Event Management & Financial Counseling/Planning, Ames High School
* Lottie Peterson, Computer Science, Eagan High School
Grace Peterson, MBA and Industrial Engineering, Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School
Grace Reiss, Systems and Nutritional Science, West Delaware High School
◊ Addison Salski, Vocal Music Education, Mundelein High School
Annika Sanden, Computer Engineering, Wayzata High School
Amelia Schroeder, Software Engineering, Ogden High School
◊ Hailey Volz, Agricultural Systems Technology, North Polk High School

* Officer
◊ Section Leader
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
Many people have contributed to our presence in Omaha and the concert program that we offer today. Sincere thanks to Beate Schmittmann (Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) and Brad Dell (Chair of the Department Music and Theatre) for their support of the choral program and for the vision of this ensemble. Cantamus students Ava Cleverelli and Addison Salzki conceived the stage movement for the ensemble. Percussion professor Jonathan Sharp worked with us on storm-making percussion, and students Ian Lewis and Jemma Bullock are improvising with that percussion. Cantamus alum Kirin Martin helped make the use of a loop machine a reality and inspired the group to explore a myriad of sounds. ISU recording engineer Chad Jacobsen has advised and provided the technology to make that work, and the idea took root during a visit from composer Moira Smiley. Professor and composer Jodi Groble gave us a beautiful, heartfelt, and specifically meaningful piece in “The Words We Need,” and has continued to develop material and work with student soloists. Finally, tremendous thanks to composers Katerina Gimon and Brad Burtin for their input and their trust in Cantamus to premiere their poignant pieces.

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“I’ve made so many wonderful friends through music and choir and have worked with amazing professors, which has been the best part of getting my degree.”

Karlee, ’24 vocal music education