

Capitol Hill Chorale
Frederick Binkholder, Artistic Director
presents

HARMONY OF ANGELS

MUSIC OF THE SHAKERS

IN SETTINGS BY KEVIN SIEGFRIED (B. 1969)

In Yonder Valley

Come to Zion

Followers of the Lamb soloists, Jonathan P. Brandt, Jessica Chaiken

Gentle Words soloist, Gabrielle Levy

Angels of Heaven

Adieu Ye Fading Things of Time soloists, Leanne Repko and John Vanderson

Prayer for the Captive soloist, Willard R. Jones

The Humble Heart

Lay Me Low

Simple Gifts

INTERMISSION

Angel of Light, Cantata, Op. 47 — Premiere

Commissioned by the Capitol Hill Chorale

I. **Invocation — Sweet Angels Come Nearer**

II. **Gift Song — Woben Mesa Crelana**

Soloists, Sarah B. Markovits and Kay Sidahmed, Elizabeth Hague, Jennifer Weyman

III. **Anthem — Sound of Salvation**

IV. **Hymn — O See the Lovely Angels**

V. **Anthem — Heavenly Purity**

VI. **Dance — Vum Vive Vum**

VII. **Anthem — Glory of Faithful Souls**

VIII. **Hymn — Beautiful Treasure**

IX. **Benediction — Holy Mother's Protecting Chain** soloist, Jennifer Weyman

I Hunger and Thirst

Recording sung by Sister R. Mildred Barker

Setting soloist, Virginia Pasley

Love is Little

Cords of Love

Cover art: Hannah Cohoon (1788-1864), *Tree of Life*, Hancock Shaker Village, 1854.
Program design and layout: Phoenix Graphics

TEXTS

WITH NOTES BY KEVIN SIEGFRIED

In Yonder Valley, Father James Whittaker, Enfield CT, 1787 (arr. 1998)

"In Yonder Valley" is one of the first known Shaker songs complete with words and music. It was ascribed to Father James Whittaker (1751-1787), who briefly took over leadership of the young Shaker community after Mother Ann died in 1784. After his death, leadership passed to American-born Shakers. The euphoric text reflects the idealism of the Shakers' first years in America.

In yonder valley there grows sweet union, let us arise and take our fill.
The winter's past and the spring appears.
The turtle dove is in our land.

Come to Zion, Paulina Bates, Lebanon NY, 1864 (arr. 2000)

Paulina Bates (1806-1884) of the Watervliet, NY community is credited with receiving this fiery song of religious conversion in 1864. Fifteen years earlier, Paulina was the author (receiving by inspiration) of a 700-page prophetic work entitled "The Divine Book of Holy and Eternal Wisdom." Copies of this visionary work were dutifully sent to rulers of every nation on earth.

Come to Zion, come to Zion, sin-sick souls in sorrow bound.
Lay your cares upon the altar where true healing may be found.
Shout Alleluia, Alleluia.
Praise resounds o'er land and sea.
All who will may come and share the glories of this jubilee.

Followers of the Lamb, Sister Clarissa Jacobs, New Lebanon NY, ca. 1847 (arr. 1999)

"Followers of the Lamb" is in the form of a revival hymn, with a repetitive verse and a rousing refrain. Popular during the mid 19th century, the revival hymn was an easily memorized musical form that proved to be most effective for tent meetings and other informal worship. As music and dance were often combined in early Shaker worship, it is not uncommon for songs to have associated hand or body movements as in the clapping and stomping in this exuberant arrangement.

O Brethren ain't you happy, O Brethren ain't you happy,
O Brethren ain't you happy, Ye followers of the Lamb.
Sing on, dance on, followers of Emanuel,
Sing on, dance on, ye followers of the Lamb.

O Sisters ain't you happy,
O Sisters ain't you happy,
Sing on, dance on, followers of the
Sing on, dance on, ye followers of the
I'm glad I am a Shaker, I'm glad I am
I'm glad I am a Shaker, Ye followers of the
I'll cross my ugly nature, I'll cross my
I'll cross my ugly nature, Ye followers of the
Gentle Words, Sister Polly M. Ruper
The equality of men and women
substantial role of women in d
Shaker music and worship. The
is credited to Sister Polly M. Ruper
This arrangement focuses on t
between relative minor and m
harmonized section.
What the dew is to the flower, ge
And a blessing to the giver, and
We should never withhold.
Gentle words kindly spoken oft
While links of love are broken b
Then O, thou gentle spirit, my c
"Do to others," be my motto, "a
Angels of Heaven, Brother Ep
Echoes of the marching ex
the steady pulses of this slo
Shaker society in northern
industry and managed a l
population never to excee
The angels of heaven are ma
Their music harmonious hov
sing:
Holy, holy, holiness unto the

O Sisters ain't you happy, O Sisters ain't you happy,
O Sisters ain't you happy, Ye followers of the Lamb.
Sing on, dance on, followers of Emanuel,
Sing on, dance on, ye followers of the Lamb.

I'm glad I am a Shaker, I'm glad I am a Shaker
I'm glad I am a Shaker, Ye followers of the Lamb.

I'll cross my ugly nature, I'll cross my ugly nature
I'll cross my ugly nature, Ye followers of the Lamb.

Gentle Words, Sister Polly M. Rupe, Pleasant Hill KY, ca. 1867 (arr. 2000)

The equality of men and women in Shaker communities lead to the substantial role of women in daily life and community leadership, as well as Shaker music and worship. The inspirational text and tune of "Gentle Words" is credited to Sister Polly M. Rupe of the Pleasant Hill, Kentucky community. This arrangement focuses on the beauty of the unison melody, which hovers between relative minor and major keys, and expands into a tenderly harmonized section.

What the dew is to the flower, gentle words are to the soul,
And a blessing to the giver, and so dear to the receiver,
We should never withhold.

Gentle words kindly spoken often soothe the troubled mind,
While links of love are broken by words that are unkind.
Then O, thou gentle spirit, my constant guardian be,
"Do to others," be my motto, "as I'd have them do to me."

Angels of Heaven, Brother Ephraim Frost, Whitewater OH, 1872 (arr. 2000)

Echoes of the marching exercises that accompanied this song can be heard in the steady pulses of this slow march tune from Whitewater, Ohio. A small Shaker society in northern Ohio, Whitewater established a thriving seed industry and managed a large acreage of land with a relatively small population never to exceed 200 members.

The angels of heaven are marching around the borders of Zion's holy ground
Their music harmonious how it doth ring, and this is the heavenly song they
sing:

Holy, holy, holiness unto the Lord, Love ye, love ye, love ye one another.

Adieu Ye Fading Things of Time, Harvard MA, 1835 (arr. 1999)

The Harvard, Massachusetts Shaker community opened in 1792 and was particularly bestowed with the gift of song. The haunting melody of "Adieu Ye Fading Things of Time" is unique among Shaker songs, exploring a hexatonic (six-note) scale that emphasizes the poignant interval of the tritone.

Adieu ye fading things of time, adieu all earthly pleasures.
I prize the Gospel far above the World's elusive treasures.
O Lord, thou art my only strength in trial and temptation.
Thou hast redeemed my soul from death, and crowned me with salvation.

All earthly glory now I see like vanity appear
Since thou, O God, has taught me how thy holy name to fear.

Adieu ye fading things of time, Adieu all earthly pleasures.
I prize the Gospel far above the World's elusive treasures.
In this I find true happiness, true peace, and consolation,
And here my soul can be at rest though in deep tribulation.

I pray the Lord protect my soul here in the new creation
That I may dwell when done with time within thy blessed mansion

Prayer for the Captive, Cecilia DeVere, New Lebanon NY, 1862 (arr. 1998)

Written during the Civil War, "Prayer for the Captive" (also known as "Supplication in a Nation's Calamity") reflects the Shakers' deep pacifist faith. By Shaker accounts, this hymn was received and sung in a dream three times by the sleeping Cecilia DeVere. A Shaker sister in Cecilia's company overheard the song and copied it down. It was reportedly sung in every Shaker community on the occasion of President Lincoln's funeral. The song reflects the pain of the Civil War, relieved only by hope for the end of slavery.

Dark is the cloud that rests over the nation,
Wild is the war-cry that pierces the air.
God's heavy judgments spread wide desolation.
Strong hearts are bowed in the depths of despair.

Lord, may the bonds of the captive be broken.
O may this struggle bring sweet liberty.
Teach us that love is a heaven-born token,
And that the truth can alone make us free.

Guide Zion's children in this trying hour.
Keep us dependent on thy love and care.
Down in the valley we find thy true power.
Lord, in thy mercy, O still guide us there.

The Humble Heart, Thomas Hammond Jr. and Eunice Wyeth, Harvard MA, ca. 1822 (arr. 2005)

One of the most beautiful of early Shaker hymns, "The Humble Heart" is an unusual collaboration between a composer, Thomas Hammond Jr. (1791-1880), and lyricist, Eunice Wyeth (1756-1830). Harvard MA was the place where Mother Ann Lee resided in the early 1780s and the community was very active in music, especially during the early years.

Whence comes this bright celestial light, what cause produces this?
A heaven opens to my sight, bright scenes of joy and bliss.
O Lord Jehovah, art thou here? This light proclaims thou art.
'I am indeed, I'm always near unto the humble heart.'

The proud and lofty I despise, but bless the meek and low.
I hear the humble soul that cries, and comfort I bestow
Of all the trees among the wood I've chose one little vine
'The meek and low are nigh to me, the humble heart is mine.'

Tall cedars fall before the wind, the tempest breaks the oak.
While slender vines will bow and bend and rise beneath the stroke.
I've chosen me one pleasant grove and set my lovely vine.
'Here in my vinyard I will rove, the humble heart is mine.'

Lay Me Low, Addah Z. Potter, New Lebanon NY, ca. 1838 (arr. 1997)

"Lay Me Low" is one of the most frequently performed Shaker arrangements, and also recorded, most notably on The Dale Warland Singers' best-selling "Harvest Home" CD. Derived from a simple and haunting gift song by Addah Z. Potter (1809-1894), "Lay Me Low" is arranged for eight-part chorus. Upon each repetition of the first section, a voice within the choral texture is "laid low" and is reduced to singing a drone on a single note, which results in a gradual build-up in the texture.

Lay me low, lay me low.
Where the Lord can find me,
Where the Lord can own me
Where the Lord can bless me.

Simple Gifts, Elder Joseph Brackett, Alfred, Maine, 1848 (arr. 2006)

Joseph Brackett, the composer of the best-known Shaker song, lived from 1797 to 1882. It is challenging to compose an arrangement of this song, simply because it has so many associations and has been used and adapted so widely. Seeking to bring a new element to the song, this arrangement of "Simple Gifts" is written in the spirited style of a South African choral anthem.

'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 find ourselves in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gain'd,
to bow and to bend we shan't be asham'd.
To turn, turn will be our delight
'Till by turning, turning we come round right.

Intermission

Angel of Light, Cantata, Op. 47 (2015) PREMIERE

Commissioned by the Capitol Hill Chorale

Angel of Light is rooted in a distinctive period of Shaker history, a remarkable decade from 1837-1847 when Shaker communities were caught up in a wave of intense spiritualism. During this period, sometimes referred to as the era of "Mother's Work" (after Mother Ann Lee, founder of Shakerism) Shaker communities experienced a tremendous outpouring of songs that were "gifted" by visiting angels and spirits. The texts in these pieces often move seamlessly between English and the unknown tongues of angels and foreign spirits. Movements III, V, and VII are Shaker anthems presented in their original forms. The remaining movements are freely adapted and "reimagined" from original Shaker sources as a form of reflection and response.

I. Invocation – Sweet Angels Come Nearer

Sweet angels come nearer,
O nearer and nearer,
Do list to our pleadings
For strength from on high.

Sweet angels come nearer,
O nearer and nearer.

II. Gift Song – Woben Mesa Crelana

Woben mesa crelana plorada sele
Meclana predale plorada sele

Meclana predale plorada sele
Meclana predale plorada sele

III. Anthem – Sound of Salvation

Holy angels are sounding salvation aloud, and saying ce lo' ce vo co', O awake,
ye souls that sleep in sin, for we are proclaiming our gospel trumpets to all
who will come, both far and near. Holy anels are proclaiming sweet peace
through the land, n aka na'. With their harps and their organs they do play, as
they march around on Zion's ground, and a full salvation they have found.
We've received in our right hands a bright shining scepter of truth, to keep in
remembrance God's holy way.

IV. Hymn – O See the Lovely Angels

O see the lovely angels,
O see them all around;
O hark, and hear their music-
Blessed, blessed sound.

Lo vana blance vone
I le vase ne
They are S-O-U-N-D-ing
The trump of Jubilee.

V. Anthem – Heavenly Purity

Gird on your armor, faithful souls, of heavenly purity,
O Sal vo van, O sal vo ve, ye are my lin ce len vo ne.
Dro vac o von de mi lan se, O blessed gospel liberty!
Shine on se lin da van ce lee, in ho ho ho ho, ho ho lan cee.

Wi lin ce wan do wire n ve, my chosen heirs, you're blessed by me,
And clothed in robes of wisdom pure, Yea sac va lenne will endure.
In heavenly order now you stand, la sanda o no ve,
Seraphs and anels guard thee with holy sac na ree.
Joined to the holy Selan, to the blessed Sela van,
Usac'ane', and protected by God's right hand.
Saith Wisdom, Come my Lin'c eve,
Taste the joys that are for thee.

VI. Dance – Vum Vive Vum

Vum vive vum vive vum vum vo
Ve vum vive vum vive vum vum vo
Vum vive vum vive vum vum vo
Ve vum vuve vo ve vum vum vo

Vum vive vum vive vum vum vo
Vive vive vive vive vum vum vo
Vum vive vum vive vum vum vo
Ve vum vive vum ve vum vum vo

VII. Anthem – Glory of the Faithful Souls

O the glory, the glory, the glory! A crown of glory, a glorious garment, a robe of beauty, which are laid up for all the faithful. We will all be alive and be faithful builders in the kingdom of Christ. How often has our Mother said, Be faithful children, be wise and keep the way of God; and again she has said, O never be discouraged nor think the way is hard; but keep your love and union pure, keep your love and union pure; and then you will gain a treasure, a never fading treasure.

VIII. Hymn – Beautiful Treasure

O the beautiful treasure laid up for the wise,
How precious the value, how glorious the prize.
Far brighter than diamonds on prince's brow,
And richer than royalty can bestow.

O the beautiful treasure laid up for the wise,
How precious the value, how glorious the prize.

IX. Benediction – Holy Mother's Protecting Chain

With my blessing I have blessed you, O my children!
With my comfort I have comforted you;
Yea, with my love I have loved you.
Vo o' vo nee; O har'ka e' on a se'.

With my union I have joined, O my children!
With my courage I've encouraged you,
Yea, with my strength I have strengthened you.
Qua on, qua o; O lar ka ree anna so.

By my wisdom I have guided you, O my children!
With my beauty I have beautified you.
Yea, with my light I've illumined you.
Vo o'vo nee; O har'ka e'on a se'.

I Hunger and Thirst, from Canterbury NH, ca. 1884 (arr. 2014)

Unlike the other Shaker settings on the program, which began with a written or printed tune, "I Hunger and Thirst" was arranged directly from a field recording, as sung by Sister R. Mildred Barker (1897-1990). Sister Mildred was active in the Alfred, Maine and Sabbathday Lake communities and represented an important 20th-century link to Shaker oral tradition and Shaker performance practice. Due to her efforts and enthusiasm, many songs were recorded which otherwise might have been lost. Gifted with an ear for music and an extraordinary memory, Sister Mildred can be heard most notably on the recording "Early Shaker Spirituals," one of the most important recordings of the Shakers themselves singing their own music. Siegfried's setting is dedicated to the Sabbathday Lake Shakers and was premiered at Sabbathday Lake in 2014.

I hunger and thirst, I hunger and thirst after true righteousness;
In what I've obtained, in what I've obtained my soul cannot rest.
An ocean I see without bottom or shore.
O feed me I'm hungry, enrich me I'm poor.

I will cry unto God, I never will cease,
Till my soul's filled with love, love, perfect love and sweet peace.

Love is Little, from South Union, Kentucky, 1834 (arr. 1997)

The words "little" and "low" appear frequently in Shaker songs to invoke the way of humility that stands so central to Shaker life. There is perhaps no better expression of Shakerism than this simple song from South Union.

Love is little, love is low,
Love will make my spirit grow.
Grow in peace, grow in light,
Love will do the thing that's right.

Cords of Love, Brother William, Canterbury NH, 1847 (arr. 2000)

An evocative gift song received at Canterbury towards the end of the "Era of Manifestations." Through all the dramatic occurrences of the 1830s and 40s—the visitations of angels and spirits, and the receiving of countless gifts of song, dance, and art—the Shakers kept a remarkable perspective on the transient nature of these gifts.

How blest are the souls who walk in pure Wisdom,
Whose feet are well-planted in virtue's fair soil,
Who cheerfully work in Mother's pure garden,
And for her Rich Blessings do willingly toil

Such, such shall dwell in glorious Mansions,
Yea soar in bright glory above.
There, there, sing for ever, yea ever and ever,
Encircled with cords of the purest love, love.

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