

WESTMINSTER COLLEGE OF THE ARTS OF RIDER UNIVERSITY

Westminster Choir College

PRESENTS

The Dreams That Remain

Westminster Williamson Voices

James Jordan, *conductor*

Gregory Stout, *accompanist*

with

Jeremy Powell, *soprano saxophone*

(Philadelphia concert only)

Veronique Shaftel, *violin*



Friday, November 9, 2018
8 p.m.
Bristol Chapel
Westminster Choir College
Princeton, N.J.

Sunday, November 11, 2018
3 p.m.
Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul
Philadelphia, PA

"Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?"
— Alfred Lord Tennyson

"Learn from your dreams what you lack."
— W.H. Auden

"You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream..."
— C.S. Lewis

Silence and Dreams.

Dreams never able to be lived and the silence that follows loss of dreams and life itself are two themes that resonate with every human being. In the wars this country has fought, those who sacrificed and lost their lives never will realize the richness of their personal life's dreams. The horrors of war abruptly ended the lives and dreams of so many. As we mark the 100th Anniversary of WWI, we are again painfully reminded of the loss of life and the horrors of war; human loss leaves us all with a deafening silence, *a silent afterglow*. If we learn to listen to what is contained in those cavernous silences they can teach us all to not only live our lives moving forward in a different way to honor the memory of a life lived, but to continue to live our own dreams, even to live dreams after some of those dreams are never realized. The new work premiered in these programs, *The Last Letter* by Thomas LaVoy, reminds us through the haunting words of a soldier about the decision to go to war that ultimately sacrifices all of his dreams and loves of his life for the country he loves. It a heartfelt requiem of sorts where the soldier Sullivan Ballou asks for forgiveness from the woman he loves for his decision to go to war. His personal dream is sacrificed for something bigger than himself.

Perhaps the overriding dreams of our lives are those of not only our own lives, but the lives of people we love with whom we share life's journey. And, I think for each one of us, forgiveness plays a major role in our life, as well as the contemplative silences that we are left with after the passing of a loved one. The life issues of Dreams not realized, loss and forgiveness are the overriding themes of this program.

Part I

The first half of our program is music that paints its own sound world of the human spirit, reminding us in sound of the luminosity of the human spirit. To be sure, our Dreams are fueled by the human spirit coupled with a belief in the magnificence of that spirit and a mystery that belies all our human want to believe in something bigger than ourselves.

Three works on this program illuminate these spiritual qualities of the human spirit: the Kyrie from the *Cantus Missa* by Rhineberger, the *Beatus vir* of James Whitbourn and the premiere of a new work, *O Magnum Mysterium* by Williamson Voices member Sam Scheibe. Each creates its own unique sound worlds as representations of grace and goodness and mystery that should permeate our day to day living and doing. These works are placed in this program to remind each of us of the abundances we carry within us, day in and day out, if we choose to recognize their presence.

Part II

The second half of this program confronts the many facets of Dreams that enter our lives. The poetry of the poets I am labeling as "Mystics" also thatches this program unto itself and plays a major role in the Dream and Silence journey in the second half of the program.

Rabindranath Tagore was a Bengali poet, novelist and painter best known for being the first non-European to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 with his book *Gitanjali, Song Offerings*. Critics have described his poems as "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, a part of the literature of the West."

In the LaVoy work, *The Dreams That Remain*, the centerpiece of this program sets the poetry of a celebrated Indian poet, *Sarojini Naidu*, a friend of the poet Tagore mentioned above. Naidu's poetry speaks directly to the spirit being able to rise again following a period of darkness after the loss of a dream.

The program closes with two works, a Benediction of sorts, with composers who again set the words of Tagore, one by Eriks Esenvalds, *Salutation* and Movement III of the work, *O Great Beyond: In Silence* by Thomas LaVoy. It is perhaps this singular piece that summarizes the spirituality and life lessons of this program. The text and music give us all the comfort and advice that we need in dealing with both the loss of those we love, and the loss of dreams that passes as we part ways at the end of life's journey.

Westminster Williamson Voices dedicates In Silence to the 11 shooting victims at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018.

*Let it not be a death but completeness
Stand still, O beautiful end, for a moment, and say your last words in silence.
We bow to you and hold up our lamps to light you on your way.*

— James Jordan

I.

Choral Improvisation on Chant: Adóro te devóte

French Melody, 17th Century
arr. Ari Carrillo and Christian Koller

Text ascribed to St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274)
Ari Carrillo, *conductor*

The program in Princeton and the program in Philadelphia will open with a Choral Improvisation based upon the chant *Adoro te devote*. This marks the frontier journey into choral improvisation that was inspired by the work of internationally recognized Gary Graden of Stockholm, Sweden, last summer at the Choral Institute at Oxford (rider.edu/oxford). Suffice it to say that all of us were deeply changed by his work. He opened us into a new sound world. We can honestly say that our improvisations in Oxford allowed us to enter a place of freedom and sound that none of us have ever experienced.

As a music psychologist, I also found the “missing link” for music learning that I had been searching to find for many years. So, next May, a new book: *Discovering Chant through Improvisation* will be published by myself and two students that have worked with me to essentially create a skill-based curriculum for teaching Improvisation through the use of Gregorian Chant. Ari Carrillo and Christian Koller have skillfully developed techniques that enable a choir to perform improvisations like you will hear in this program. As a teacher, there is no greater reward than to see your students create such a powerful pedagogy and basis for musical expression that will benefit thousands of choral singers and their conductors for years to come. My deepest thanks to them, and my thanks to Gary Graden for his profound inspiration.

Gary Graden will join us for our recording sessions in January as we record two choral improvisations using guest artists soprano Krystel Dib from Beirut, Lebanon, soprano Isabella Burns '15 and Jeremy Powell who will be heard in the Philadelphia program. Jeremy Powell is the soprano saxophonist heard on the *Living Voices* recording by Williamson Voices on NAXOS performing the music of James Whitbourn.

— James Jordan

*Adóro te devóte, latens Déitas,
Quæ sub his figúris vere látitas:
Tíbi se cor meum totum súbjicit,
Quia te contémpans totum défícit.
Amen.*

I adore You devoutly,
Godhead unseen,
Who truly lies hidden
Under these sacramental forms.
Amen.

Interpolations on Sicut Cervus

Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525 – 1594)
arr. James Jordan

Semi-chorus: Ari Carrillo, Jillian Corn, Emily Cousins, Wendy Darr, Paul David Flood, Jessica Forbes, Alex Garcia, Palmer Haffner, Michaela Hilling, Christian Koller, Lea Kun, Keenan Mahon, Rene Miville, Joel Noonan, Guillermo Pasarin, Lindsey Reinhard, Katrina Roberts, Sam Scheibe, Rebecca Smith, Brianna Super, Alexandra Thomas, Alex Thomlinson, NicolePaige Uvenio, Danielle Verguldi, Zachary Wilson, Gabe Woods
Jeremy Powell, *soprano saxophone*
Philadelphia Concert Only

The inspiration for “*Interpolations on Sicut cervus desiderat*” was a recording by Jan Garbarek and the Hilliard Ensemble. In the liner notes of *Officium* Garbarek writes:

“When jazz began at the beginning of [the twentieth] century, it had no name, nor did polyphony when it began about a thousand years earlier. These two nameless historical moments were points of departure for two of the most fundamental ideas in western music: improvisation and composition. What is the name of this music? It is simply what happens when a saxophonist and a choir meet together to make music.”

Just as jazz improvisation is a collaborative experience, so too was the birth of this piece. Although I was the arranger, there were many persons who contributed to this “new look” at Palestrina. It was my decision to open the piece at two pivotal moments in this motet, places that I considered ideal based upon cadential structure. It was also my desire to have the soprano saxophone enter into the texture, and become another voice within the motet.

Jeremy Powell has performed with the Westminster Williamson Voices on many occasions. A gifted soprano saxophonist, I provided Jeremy with the parameters and he composed the saxophone part. Timothy Brown of Clare College, Cambridge, realized the re-barrings of this edition.

— James Jordan

*Sicut cerva desiderat
ad fontes aquarum:
ita desiderat anima mea
ad te, Deus.*

As a deer desires
the running waters,
So desires my soul
For you, O God.

II.

Beatus Vir

Gregorian Chant
Gradual - Mass I

Jillian Corn, Wendy Darr, Jess Forbes, Jules Fournier,
Lindsey Reinhard, Alexandra Thomas, Danielle Verguldi

Beatus Vir

James Whitbourn
(b. 1963)

Text: Gradual for Feast of St. Matthew

Beatus vir came into being through a commission from St. Matthew's Church, Northampton, a parish church in the Anglo-Catholic tradition whose impressive line of musical commissions began with Benjamin Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb* (1943). The text, *Beatus vir*, was chosen for the 2017 commission since it is the Gradual for the Feast of St. Matthew.

By the time the composer came to work on the piece he had been invited to write, the church's Director of Music had taken up a new position at Llandaff Cathedral, so the work was created in discussion with the new Director of Music - Justin Miller, a graduate of Westminster Choir College (who, by coincidence, turned pages at the U.S. premiere of *Annelies* in Bristol Chapel in 2007!) His choir of children and adult singers premiered the work on St. Matthew's Day 2017 and then performed it again a few days later for a special service that preceded a concert in the church given by the Choir of King's College, Cambridge. The work is for unaccompanied voices and incorporates melodies from the plainsong setting of the text, including the extraordinary incipit with its unusual repeating motif.

— James Whitbourn

*Beatus vir, qui timet Dominum:
In Mandatis ejus cupit nimis.
Potens in terra erit semen ejus:
Generatio rectoris benedicetur*

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord:
He delights greatly in his commandments.
His seed will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.

Cantus Missa in E-Flat
I. Kyrie

Josef Rheinberger
(1839 – 1901)

Text: Mass Ordinary

Josef Rheinberger's *Cantus Missa in E-Flat* was written in 1878, shortly after he was awarded the position of Hofkapellmeister at the Bavarian Court. Musicologists and critics of the time suggest that the mass was a highlight of his entire output of unaccompanied choral music. Joseph Renner, a student of Rheinberger's, wrote, "*Cantus Missae* is permeated with a truly religious atmosphere, with blooming polyphony, constructed visibly with love and care, and forms the culmination of the a cappella works written by Rheinberger."

The *Cantus Missae in E-Flat* is orchestrated for eight-part double choir, a style that matured in the late Renaissance with the Venetian School, especially in the music of Giovanni Gabrieli. While the polychoral structure often employed a homophonic texture that offered textual clarity, Rheinberger instead wrote all eight parts with a chant-like character that was similar to early organum. Thus the basic compositional texture was homophonic, with polyphonic elements to highlight specific words and larger sections of the text. The mass was dedicated to Pope Leo XIII on the night of its premiere. Leo XIII was so taken with the performance that he awarded Rheinberger the Knight's Cross of the Order of Saint Gregory.

— James Jordan

*Kyrie eleison,
Christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison.*

Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy.

III.

O magnum mysterium

Sam Scheibe
(b. 1999)*World Premiere*

Text from the Fourth Responsorial Chant at Matins on Christmas Day

O magnum mysterium is a text that speaks of wonder among the inevitable. I have always found it curious that so many composers return to these words to set music, considering it is of a story so many have heard before. Would it not become redundant after a point to continue the recycling of the same texts? However, Latin texts such as this have withstood the test of time, and continue to provide a platform upon which today's composers can build. The settings of these texts have an incredibly refreshing sense of inevitability, one that amplifies wonder in an already well-told story.

This setting aims to highlight these notions through pitch. A great amount of mystery can be explored in the harmony, though all centered around a single pitch. The music, then, takes on a similar yearning for an inevitable return. Just as the text implies a great mystery, it's a return to a familiar and inevitable human theme.

— Sam Scheibe

*O magnum mysterium,
et admirabile sacramentum,
ut Animalia viderent Dominum natum,
jacentem in praesepe.
Beata Virgo, cujus viscera
meruerunt portare
Dominum Jesum Christum.
Alleluia.*

O great mystery,
and wonderful sacrament,
that animals should see the new-born Lord,
lying in a manger.
Blessed is the Virgin, whose womb
was worthy to bear
the Lord Jesus Christ.
Alleluia.

INTERMISSION

IV.

The Last Letter

Thomas LaVoy
(b. 1990)*World Premiere*

Commissioned by The Westminster Williamson Voices in Commemoration of WW1
Text drawn from The Last Letter of Sullivan Ballou

René Miville, *baritone*
Veronique Shaftel, *violin*

When I was approached by James Jordan earlier this year to compose a work commemorating the First World War, I immediately thought of the last letter of Sullivan Ballou. Though its place in history is considerably earlier than the First World War, having been written by Sullivan on the eve of his death in the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862, I feel this remarkable letter is a testament to the strength and courage that is necessary in times of war, as well as a reminder of the terrible cost that war brings upon families. I first heard of the letter while watching Ken Burns' monumental documentary *The Civil War* with my father some time ago. The reading of this letter, which occurs in the very first episode of the series, is paired with a beautiful fiddle tune titled "Ashokan Farewell," originally composed by Jay Ungar in 1982 and later adopted as the title theme for the documentary.

While the inclusion of this tune in Ken Burns' *The Civil War* is heart-breaking and iconic, I chose to take a different path when composing a work based on Sullivan's last letter. As much as I love the 'Ashokan Farewell,' I feel that the darker subjects written about by Sullivan in his final letter were inferred rather than directly represented. The conflict between love of country and love of family saturates Sullivan's writing — he was clearly tortured by the idea that his sense of duty, and his actions to uphold that sense of duty, would result in the destruction of his beloved Sarah's dreamt-of future with him. Having spent his formative years as an orphan, the thought of offering that "bitter fruit," as he described it, to his own children tormented him. He sought forgiveness — for his faults, for the pains that his actions caused his wife and children, for his foolishness and thoughtlessness.

In spite of this darkness, his love for Sarah and his son Edgar was undeniable and ultimately responsible for the actions that would tear him away from them. Sullivan faced his internal fears and conflicts and fought anyway, believing that the investment of his life in maintaining the relatively new American government was the best way of protecting his family and their way of life. To quote Nelson Mandela (and the many others who have said very similar things), “courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.”

The Last Letter seeks to find a balance between the beauty of Sullivan Ballou’s final letter to his wife and the horrific reality of the costs of war. Throughout the work, Sarah is personified by the fiddle, with the opening folk-like statement being “Sarah’s tune.” The middle section is much darker, with the choir incessantly repeating the words “forgive me,” while the baritone soloist, representing Sullivan, enumerates his faults and asks for forgiveness. The work ends very simply, with *ad libitum* statements in both the fiddle and baritone solo, followed by a final, unaccompanied iteration of “Sarah’s tune” — Sullivan’s final meditation on his beloved wife.

— Thomas LaVoy

Sarah, I can’t describe to you this night.
Two thousand men around me lie sleeping;
The last before death.

And I, knowing I too may die,
Am communing with God, my country
And thee.

Sarah, my love for you is deathless;
It seems to bind me with mighty cables
That none but God can break.

And yet my duty bears me on,
With all these chains,
To the battlefield.

Sarah, never forget how much I love you;
That when my last breath escapes me,
It will whisper your name.

Sarah, forgive my many faults;
Forgive the pains that I have caused you,
Forgive my foolishness, forgive my thoughtlessness.

Sarah, how selfish I have been,
Knowing that my love of country
Would burn to ashes your hopes of future years.

O is this weakness, is this dishonorable —
That, having lived as an orphan,
I would feed that bitter fruit to my own children?

Sarah, if the dead can come back
And move around those they loved,
I shall always be near you.

Sarah, do not think me dead —
Think I am gone, and wait for thee,
For we shall meet again.

The Dreams That RemainThomas LaVoy
(b. 1990)

1. Song of a Dream
2. In the Forest
3. Transience

Text: Sarojini Naidu (1879 – 1949)

The Dreams That Remain was commissioned by Laudamus Chamber Chorale of Fort Collins, Colo., (Laura Gillett, *conductor*) to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the choir's formation. The work sets three poems by the celebrated Indian poet Sarojini Naidu, a contemporary and acquaintance of the Bengali mystical poet Rabindranath Tagore, whose poetry I have often set in the past. By focusing on the subject of dreams, both literally and figuratively, this work explores what happens to a person when their hopes and dreams are dashed and they are forced to seek out new dreams.

The dramatic arc of *The Dreams That Remain* is created through the ordering of these particular poems, which are not placed in the original order that Naidu intended. It begins with "Song of a Dream," in which the speaker finds him or herself in the depths of a dreamy wood, surrounded by light and the spirits of truth, love, and peace. The second movement, "In the Forest," is much darker. It speaks of the burning of one's dreams in a "funeral pyre," the scattering away of their ashes and the need to rise again out of these ashes into the "war of the world." "Transience," the final movement, is a simple song that reminds the listener of the temporary nature of all things, as well as the ability of the human spirit to rise again following a period of darkness.

Throughout the work, ostinatos are used in the piano to convey both a dreamlike, shimmering atmosphere and the concept of transience itself; the idea that life continues to move forward with the relentless march of time, regardless of the very human tendency to spend a great deal of time and energy dwelling on the events of our past.

— Thomas LaVoy

1. Song of a Dream

Once in the dream of a night I stood
 Lone in the light of a magical wood,
 Soul-deep in visions that poppy-like sprang;
 And spirits of Truth were the birds that sang,
 And spirits of Love were the stars that glowed,
 And spirits of Peace were the streams that flowed
 In that magical wood in the land of sleep.

2. In the Forest

Here, O my heart, let us burn the dear dreams that are dead,
 Here in this wood let us fashion a funeral pyre
 Of fallen white petals and leaves that are mellow and read,
 Here let us burn them in noon's flaming torches of fire.

We are weary, my heart, we are weary so long have we borne
 The heavy loved burden of dreams that are dead, let us rest,
 Let us scatter their ashes away, for a while let us mourn;
 We will rest, O my heart, till the shadows are gray in the west.

But soon we must rise, O my heart, we must wander again
 Into the war of the world and the strife of the throng;
 Let us rise, O my heart, let us gather the dreams that remain,
 We will conquer the sorrow of life with the sorrow of song.

3. Transience

Nay, do not grieve tho' life be full of sadness,
 Dawn will not veil her splendor for your grief,
 Nor spring deny their bright, appointed beauty
 To lotus blossom and Ashoka leaf.

Nay, do not pine, tho' life be dark with trouble,
 Time will not pause or tarry on his way;
 To-day that seems so long, so strange, so bitter,
 Will soon be some forgotten yesterday.

Nay, do not weep; new hopes, new dreams, new faces,
 The unspent joy of all the unborn years,
 Will prove your heart a traitor to its sorrow,
 And make your eyes unfaithful to their tears.

V.

Salutation

Ēriks Ešenvalds
 (b. 1977)

Text: Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941)

Salutation was composed for a cappella choir to a poem by Bengali poet and musician Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941). The music takes up the spiritual message of the poem, that we live our lives in one salutation to God ending back in an eternal home.

— Ēriks Ešenvalds

In one salutation to thee, my God,
 Let all my senses spread out
 and touch this world at thy feet.

Like a raincloud of July hung low
 with its burden of unshed showers,
 let all my mind bend down at thy door
 in one salutation to thee.

Let all my songs gather together
 Their diverse strains into a single current
 And flow to a sea of silence
 In one salutation to thee.

Like a flock of homesick cranes
 Flying night and day back to their mountain nets,
 let all my take its voyage to its eternal home
 in one salutation to thee.

O Great Beyond**III. In Silence**

Thomas LaVoy
 (b. 1990)

Text from *The Gardener* by Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941)

Jessica Forbes, *soprano*
 Emily Cousins, *alto*

O Great Beyond was commissioned by JAM (the John Armitage Memorial) and first performed by the BBC Singers and Nicholas Cleobury on July 8, 2016, as part of the JAM on the Marsh festival. The text is taken from *The Gardener*, a collection of verse by Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941). Published one year after Tagore's Nobel Prize-winning collection of spiritual poems, *Gitanjali* (1912), *The Gardener* contains poems that were written much earlier in his career. Tagore retrospectively described this collection as the "lyrics of love and life." The musical narrative of *O Great Beyond* is meant to mirror the stages of love portrayed in *The Gardener*, culminating in the desire for a "Beautiful End" in the final movement. This work was recorded this past summer by The Same Stream conducted by James Jordan.

This work is dedicated with love to my good friends and supporters Margaret Carlaw and Professor Derek Ogston, CBE. Their dedication and encouragement of creative endeavors in North East Scotland is nothing short of inspirational, and has greatly benefited the University of Aberdeen community at large.

— Thomas LaVoy

Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet.
 Let it not be a death but completeness.
 Let love melt into memory and pain into songs.
 Let the last touch of your hands be gentle like the flower of the night.
 Stand still, O Beautiful End, for a moment, and say your last words in silence.
 I bow to you and hold up my lamp to light you on your way.

About the Artists

Grammy®-nominated conductor **JAMES JORDAN** is recognized and praised throughout the musical world as one of America's pre-eminent conductors, recording artists, writers, music psychologists and innovators in choral music. He was described as a "visionary" by *Choral Journal*, which cited his book *Evoking Sound* as a "must read." His more than 40 books explore both the philosophical and spiritual basis of musicianship, as well as aspects of choral rehearsal teaching and learning, and they are considered to be essential references in the conducting profession. He is professor and senior conductor at Westminster Choir College where he conducts Westminster Schola Cantorum and the critically acclaimed Westminster Williamson Voices. He is also director of the Westminster Conducting Institute and co-director of the Choral Institute at Oxford (rider.edu/Oxford). He is artistic director and conductor of the professional choral ensemble, The Same Stream (thesamestreamchoir.com).

His recordings with the Westminster Williamson Voices have garnered wide critical acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic. *Choir and Organ* wrote about their Grammy®-nominated recording *Annelies*, "Jordan's instinctive understanding of the score makes this a profound and emotionally charged experience." 2018 – 19 will mark the release of three new recordings with him as conductor: *Silence into Light* with the Westminster Williamson Voices; *Serenity — The Music of Paul Mealor* and *Songs of the Questioner* featuring the music of Thomas LaVoy, Dan Forrest, Peter Relph and Paul Mealor with The Same Stream Choir. The 10 CDs under his direction are available through iTunes and Amazon. His work with The Same Stream Choir will also be seen in a new video documentary and profile released by J.W. Pepper and available for viewing at thesamestreamchoir.com.

Dr. Jordan's career and publications have been devoted to innovative educational changes in the choral art, which have been embraced around the world. 2017 – 18 marked the publication of six new books. *Inside the Choral Rehearsal* is a landmark book applying the Music Learning Theory of Edwin Gordon to the choral rehearsal. Additional new titles are *Conductor as Prism*, *The Complete Choral Warm-Up Exercises* (with Jesse Borower and Brian Sengdala), *The Anatomy of Tone* (with Sean McCarther and Kathy Price) and *The Moral Acoustics of Sound*. Learn more at GIAMusic.com/Jordan. 2019 will see the publication of four new books: *The Musician's Abundance*, *Movement Warm-ups for Choral Ensembles*, *Conductor as Architect* and *Discovering Improvisation through Chant*, co-authored with Gary Graden and Westminster students Ari Carillo and Christian Koller.

His residencies, master classes and guest conducting have taken him throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Australia. He made his Carnegie Hall debut in 2015, conducting the New York premiere of Paul Mealor's *Stabat Mater*. He will begin touring with The Same Stream later in 2018. In November 2015, Dr. Jordan conducted the world premiere of Paul Mealor's First Symphony: *Passiontide*, in Scotland. In 2016, he conducted the Westminster Williamson Voices, the first college choir to appear in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's MetLiveArts series, in a performance of the virtuosic *Kanon Pokajanen* by Arvo Pärt. James Jordan has been honored as a distinguished alumnus of Temple University, where he has been inducted into the University's Hall of Fame. In 2016, he received the distinguished alumni medal from Susquehanna University. He was awarded the distinguished Doctor of Music degree by the University of Aberdeen in Scotland in 2014 to honor his artistry and contributions to choral music throughout the world. The University, established in 1485, has awarded degrees throughout its history to only two Americans: Dr. Jordan and Morten Lauridsen. He shares this honor with Gustav Holst, Benjamin Britten and Dame Joan Sutherland.

WESTMINSTER WILLIAMSON VOICES

"We would call Williamson Voices a Rolls-Royce of choirs..."
from Video for The Choral Institute at Oxford
 Daniel Hyde, Conductor Designate, King's College Choir, Cambridge

The Grammy®-nominated Westminster Williamson Voices, named for the founder of Westminster Choir College, John Finley Williamson, is praised by reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic. The ensemble is the resident choir of the Choral Institute at Oxford (CIO), now in its sixth year. The CIO is one of the leading institutes in the world for the training of conductors that emphasizes artistry in performance. Founded by James Jordan, the ensemble has distinguished itself in the choral world for its distinctive artistry, recordings, educational outreach and its mission to perform new music. The choir is also recognized as a living choral laboratory. It is one of the few ensembles in the world that use chant as the center of their musicianship study and performance. This emphasis has grown out of its residencies and study at the Choral Institute at Oxford. Beginning in 2014, the choir embarked on a three-year project studying the performance practice and spirituality surrounding the works of Arvo Pärt in conjunction with the Arvo Pärt Project. This project culminated in the performance of his monumental *Kanon Pokajanen* in the Metropolitan Museum of

Art's Temple of Dendur as part of the prestigious MetLiveArts series (the first college ensemble invited to participate the series) and at the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Philadelphia.

Reviewers on both sides of the Atlantic are of one voice in praising the ensemble for its world premiere recordings on the Naxos label. *Gramophone* magazine has described the Westminster Williamson Voices as an ensemble of "intimate and forceful choral artistry," with a tone that is "controlled and silken in sustained phrases as they are vibrantly sonorous in extroverted material." *American Record Guide* praised the ensemble as "without peer." *Choral Journal* has described the Westminster Williamson Voices as an ensemble of "supreme artistry" and a choir that performs with "truth and precision." And from the Arvo Pärt Project's publication: "The Westminster Williamson Voices under his (Jordan's) direction are coming into their own in the American choral scene both here and abroad."

In July 2013, the Williamson Voices performed as part of the worldwide Britten 100 celebration: the 50th anniversary re-enactment performance of the premiere of *St. Nicolas* in the Lancing College Chapel in Sussex, where the work was premiered with the composer conducting. That same year, the choir also made its UK debut performance at Oxford as part of the Westminster Choral Institute at Oxford and the SJE Artist series. In 2015, the choir performed Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* under the baton of the newly appointed Director of King's College, Cambridge, Daniel Hyde, on the day of the 50th Anniversary of the work's premiere.

Westminster Williamson Voices has established itself as a voice of composers of our time, and it has been acclaimed for its creative programming and collaborations with other art forms. Most notable are the ensemble's performance at The Philadelphia Cathedral of Eric Whitacre's *Leonardo Dreams of His Flying Machine* with the renowned Spiral Q Puppet Theater and the premiere of James Whitbourn's *Luminosity* with The ArcheDream Blacklight Dance Theater Company of Philadelphia.

The choir has premiered more than 40 choral works and presented several early performances and premieres by noted composers Jackson Hill, William Duckworth, Paul Mealor, Tarik O'Regan, Roger Ames, Robert Moran, Blake Henson, Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, Uģis Prauliņš, Gerald Custer, James Whitbourn, Thomas LaVoy, Cortlandt Matthews, Kile Smith, Thomas LaVoy, Anthony Bernanducci, Anthony Maglione, Sam Scheibe and Dan Forrest. The choir has premiered three major works by British composer James Whitbourn that have attracted international attention. In 2007, it performed the world premiere of the chamber version of *Annelies*, the first major choral setting of the *Diary of Anne Frank*. In 2008, it shared in a commission of *Luminosity*, a work for triple choir, dancers, viola solo, organ and tanpura. In 2010, the choir premiered Whitbourn's *Requiem Canticorum*. Past seasons have also included performances of Debussy's *Nocturnes* with The Princeton Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rossen Milanov. In 2013, the choir performed the U.S. premiere in New York of Paul Mealor's *Crucifixus* for choir, orchestra and baritone soloist. In April 2014, the choir made its Lincoln Center debut at Alice Tully Hall performing James Whitbourn's *Annelies*.

The choir has also assembled an impressive recorded discography, with more than 10 discs. It has recorded more than 50 choral masterworks on the *Teaching Music through Performance* CD box sets that are used by conductors around the world. The ensemble can also be seen and heard in the DVD *The Empowered Choral Rehearsal: Choral Masterclasses with Simon Carrington*. The choir has seven world premiere recordings to its credit, including its 2011 recording on the Naxos label, *Living Voices: The Music of James Whitbourn*. James Whitbourn's *Annelies*, performed with The Lincoln Trio; Arianna Zukerman, soprano; and Bharat Chandra, clarinet; was released by Naxos in 2013 and received a Grammy® nomination in 2013 for "Best Choral Performance." London's *Guardian* wrote about the recording "The performance as a whole...is well prepared and palpably committed as befits a premiere recording." *Gramophone* lauded Westminster Williamson Voices on the *Annelies* recording as "exhilarating" and described the ensemble as singing "with a precision and finesse normally found in the best of the UK's large chamber choirs."

In 2016, the choir released *Carolae*, its third recording on the Naxos label. The choir also released another recording, *A Hole in the Sky*, on the GIACHoralworks label late that summer. Both CD's charted on Billboard iTunes and Amazon Classical List. The *Guardian* in the UK listed *Carolae* as one of the five best Christmas CD releases for 2016, calling the performance a "knockout." In 2017, the choir released *Silence to Light*. That disc includes movements from Arvo Pärt's *Kanon Pokajanen*, as well as definitive performances of Whitacre's *Lux Arumque*, Jackson Hill's *When Spring is Born at Last* and James Whitbourn's *Pater Noster*. A DVD release of the *Kanon Pokajanen*, filmed at its Philadelphia Basilica performance, is planned for 2019.

In February 2019, Williamson Voices will release a new recording: *Ola Gjeilo: Sunrise Mass*. This disc features the new string orchestra version of the *Sunrise Mass* with a string orchestra of 24 players chosen from The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Opera Orchestra of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Chamber Orchestra. The disc includes other works by Gjeilo, in addition to Mendelssohn, Duruflé motets and Gregorian chant.

As the resident choir for the Choral Institute at Oxford (CIO), the Westminster Williamson Voices has inspired and taught more than 200 conductors. Additionally, for the past two years the choir has been a part of the Oxford Festival of the Arts, which has presented other leading choral ensembles, including Tenebrae and Voces8. Last summer, the choir performed *Luminosity*, a work commissioned for the Williamson Voices and conducted by the composer as part of that Festival.

The ensemble's 2018 – 2019 season includes a new recording, *Aurora*, in the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul and a performance of Paul Mealor's *Requiem*. In April it will perform *Annelies* with full orchestra at The National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. under the baton of the composer and friend of the choir, James Whitbourn. Please check the Westminster Choir College website for ticket information in early Spring 2019.

GREGORY STOUT is a first-year student at Westminster Choir College in the Master of Music in Accompanying and Coaching

program. He completed his Bachelor of Music (choral emphasis) at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, studying piano with Dr. George Kiorpes. More recently, he has collaborated with area singers on recording and performance projects and served last year as accompanist for the choirs of Drew University in Madison, N.J. Gregory studies at Westminster with Dr. JJ Penna.

Since 2005 saxophonist **JEREMY POWELL** has been a frequent collaborator with the Westminster Williamson Voices, playing soprano saxophone on various pieces by Tarik O'Reagan and James Whitbourn, as well as collaborating with Dr. James Jordan on tonight's featured rearrangement of Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus Desiderat*. Mr. Powell has played and recorded with various jazz, classical and world music artists across the United States, Japan, Europe and South America, including Eddie Palmieri, Arturo O'Farrill and the late Kenny Drew, Jr., to name a few. *Gramophone* has described Mr. Powell's playing as "compelling" and the *Guardian* has described Mr. Powell's classical playing as "spreading a healing balm over the whole piece." As an educator, Mr. Powell has taught music to students of all ages

from around the world for over a decade at public elementary, middle and high schools as well as private schools which include Jeff Berlin's Player's School of Music and the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music. Mr. Powell currently resides in Brooklyn, N.Y., where he continues to teach and play with an assortment of musical artists and projects throughout New York City.

VERONIQUE SHAFTEL has performed alongside the Princeton Girl Choir, and she has been in the Tanglewood Boston Young Artist Orchestra and the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra. Ms. Shaftel is currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in music education at Westminster Choir College and has studied violin privately since the age of 3. She has performed alongside fiddler Mark O'Connor, was a recipient of the SEVEC music grant, and has worked with artists such as Rachel Barton Pine and Kevin Lawrence. She was selected as the Roxbury Choral Institute's Grand Prize Classical Vocalist Winner and won the Florida Big Bend Concerto Competition. Ms. Shaftel works as a freelance violinist and also directs the St. James Catholic Church Children's Choir.

Westminster Williamson Voices

James Jordan, *conductor*

Levi Tarrant Pratt, *graduate assistant conductor*

Gregory Stout, *accompanist*

SOPRANO

Felicia Betts, *Mays Landing, NJ*
Elizabeth Boyle, *Drexel Hill, PA*
Jillian Corn, *Hamilton, NJ**
Taylor Cullen, *Moorestown, NJ*
Wendy Darr, *Little Rock, AR*
Jessica Forbes, *Fort Myers, FL*

Julianne Fournier, *North Attleboro, MA*
Amia Langer, *Fanwood, NJ*
Maddie Murphy, *Levittown, PA*
Jennifer O'Brien, *San Jose, CA*
Paige Pendleton, *Pennsville, NJ*
Juliet Rafanelli, *Westbury, NY*

Lindsey Reinhard, *Yardley, PA**
Hannah Schreffler, *Hamburg, PA*
Kathryn Smith, *Lumberton, NJ*
Alexandra Thomas, *State College, PA*
Danielle Verguldi, *Quakertown, PA*
Lindsey Wildman, *Santa Cruz, CA*

ALTO

Rhiannon Charney, *Boothwyn, PA*
Emily Cousins, *Kingwood, TX*
Jessica Dalrymple, *Wellesley, MA*
Sarah Engel, *Rochester, NY*
Jaclyn Gisondi, *Shrewsbury, NJ*

Samantha Gordon, *Cranford, NJ*
Michaela Hilling, *Harleysville, PA*
Leah Kun, *Easton, PA*
Julianna Massielo, *Yardley, PA*
Katrina Roberts, *Moorestown, NJ*

Rebecca Smith, *Sanatoga, PA*
Brianna Super, *Carmel, NY**
NicolePaige Uvenio, *Roxbury, NJ**
Caroline Voyack, *Moorestown, NJ*
Kelly Zuzic, *Waretown, NJ*

TENOR

Devon Barnes, *Willingboro, NJ*
Eric Becker, *Westhampton Beach, NY*
Noah Bram, *Westfield, NJ*
Ari Carrillo, *Philadelphia, PA*
Paul David Flood, *Campbell Hall, NY**

Zachary Fulcher, *Medford, NJ*
Palmer Haffner, *Fort Myers, FL**
Jacob Keleman, *Larchmont, NY*
Christian Koller, *Cape Coral, FL*
Joshua Lisner, *Bridgewater, NJ*

Keenan Mahon, *Pitman, NJ*
Guillermo Pazarin, *Scranton, PA*
Levi Tarrant Pratt, *Tucson, AZ*

BASS

Karl Cepeda, *Guam, USA*
Alex Garcia, *Saint Petersburg, FL*
Zachary Kent, *Wellington, FL*
Alex Miller, *Dingmans Ferry, PA*
René Miville, *Captiva, FL**

Ryan Newsome, *Wall, NJ*
Joel Noonan, *River Vale, NJ*
Anthony Pinkerton, *Orlando, FL*
Alex Pino, *Ashburn, VA*
Sam Scheibe, *Moorestown, NJ**

Alex Thomlinson, *Dahlonega, GA*
Marcus Timpone, *Berkeley, CA*
Zachary Wilson, *Norwalk, CT*
Gabe Woods, *Dryden, NY*

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