



Westport
Presbyterian
Church

WESTPORT
CONCERT SERIES

**MAKE THEM HEAR YOU:
AMPLIFYING VOICES
THAT NEED TO BE HEARD**



LIVESTREAM CONCERT

201 Westport Road, KCMO 64111 Friday, March 5, 2021 7 p.m.

Make Them Hear You: Amplifying Voices That Need to Be Heard

Westport Presbyterian Church
March 5, 2021 at 7:00pm CST

Emily Davidson, *piano*
Neal Long, *tenor*
Joshua Stark, *baritone*

Jordan Voth, *piano*
Jennifer Weiman, *mezzo-soprano*
Emma WitbolsFeugen, *mezzo-soprano*

Make Them Hear You from *Ragtime*

Stephen Flaherty
(b. 1960)
Arranged by Mark Hayes
(b. 1953)

Lady of the Harbor

Lee Hoiby
(1926-2011)
Emma WitbolsFeugen, *mezzo-soprano*

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dave Ragland
Neal Long, *tenor*

Love Remained

I. Hold On

II. Uncle Ronnie

III. Love Remained

IV. Hope

Emma WitbolsFeugen, *mezzo-soprano* & Joshua Stark, *baritone*

Ben Moore
(b. 1960)

Take Care of This House from *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*

Leonard Bernstein
(1918-1990)
Arranged by Arnold Freed

My Dearest Ruth

Stacy Garrop
(b. 1969)
Neal Long, *tenor*

Memory Mist

Florence Price
(1887-1953)
Emily Davidson, *piano*

Home of the Brave

Ricky Ian Gordon
(b. 1956)
Neal Long, *tenor*

Through the Guarded Gate

II. A Mother to the War-Makers

III. The Old Suffragist

V. The Women's Litany

Jennifer Weiman, *mezzo-soprano* & Jordan Voth, *piano*

Juliana Hall
(b. 1958)

Lift Every Voice and Sing

John Rosamond Johnson
(1873-1954)
Arranged by Horace J. Scruggs, III

Program Notes & Song Texts

Make Them Hear You from *Ragtime*

Music by Stephen Flaherty, Words by Lynn Ahrens, Arranged by Mark Hayes

Note from Emily: At a late point in the musical *Ragtime*, Harlem pianist Coalhouse Walker, fed up with gratuitous violence after having his new car destroyed by a racist fire squad, vows to wait to marry his fiancée Sarah until he receives justice. When Sarah appeals to the Vice-President at a rally, she is beaten to death by the Secret Service (someone shouts: “She has a gun!”) Grieving and incensed, Coalhouse decides to resort to violence and holes up in a library. Booker T. Washington goes into the library to speak to Coalhouse, and later, convinced there are more peaceful ways to seek justice, Coalhouse Walker sings this song. It has come to symbolize the fight for equality and justice in these troubled days. We took some liberties with the lyrics for this recital in consideration of inclusivity.

Go out and tell our story. Let it echo far and wide.
Make them hear you.
How justice was our battle and how justice was denied.
Make them hear you.
And say to those who blame us for the way we chose to fight
That sometimes there are battles that are more than black and white.
And I could not put down my sword when justice was my right.
Make them hear you.
Go out and tell our story to your daughters and your sons.
Make them hear you.
And tell them, in our struggle, we were not the only ones.
Make them hear you.
Your sword could be a sermon or the power of the pen.
Teach every child to raise his voice and then, my brothers,
Then will justice be demanded by ten million righteous men.
Make them hear you.
When they hear you, I'll be near you again!

Lady of the Harbor

Music by Lee Hoiby, Words by Emma Lazarus

Note from Neal: “Lady of the Harbor” is the second song of Lee Hoiby’s *Three Women* song cycle and sets the final quote of Emma Lazarus’ sonnet entitled “The New Colossus.” Lazarus’ entire sonnet is inscribed on a bronze plaque and hung inside the Statue of Liberty. The poem, written in 1883, was engraved and hung inside the statue in 1903. Have these words been forgotten? Biographer Esther Schor says, “The irony is that the statue goes on speaking, even when the tide turns against immigration—even against immigrants themselves, as they adjust to their American lives. You can’t think of the statue without hearing the words Emma Lazarus gave her.”

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Music by Dave Ragland, Words by Gwendolyn Brooks

Note from Neal: Gwendolyn Brooks' poetic tribute paints a vivid portrait of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a leader, a man of strength, and champion of justice. How fitting for one pioneer to write about another: Brooks was the first African American to receive a Pulitzer Prize in 1950, the first African-American woman inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Appointed the Poet Laureate of Illinois in 1968 and Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in 1985-86, Brooks' powerful words and prolific writing career still live on today. Dave Ragland, the composer of this piece, was recently commissioned by Nashville Opera to write *One Vote Won*, an opera centered on suffragist Frankie Pierce and Civil Rights activist Diane Nash. Regarding the opera, Nashville Opera CEO and Artistic Director John Hoomes said, "This original opera brings together the Women's Suffrage Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the disenfranchisement of modern-day voters to tell a story of personal liberty and the hard-earned right to make change by casting your vote. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it, and with this work we want to remember those who vigilantly fought so that every citizen can now exercise the special freedom our country grant us – the right to vote."

A man went forth with gifts.
He was a prose poem.
He was a tragic grace.
He was a warm music.
He tried to heal the vivid volcanoes.
His ashes are reading the world.
His dream still wishes to anoint
The barricades of faith and control.
His word still burns the center of the sun,
Above the thousands, the hundred thousands.
The word was justice.
It was spoken.
So it shall be spoken.
So it shall be done.

Love Remained

Music by Ben Moore

Note from Neal: *Love Remained* explores issues concerning LGBTQIA+ youth. The first song is based on a speech by Fort Worth City Councilman Joel Burns in which he addresses recent suicides of queer teenagers as well as his own experience as a victim of bullying. The speech became a popular video as part of the 'It Gets Better' campaign, the online resource for struggling queer youth started by advocate Dan Savage. Emma has changed the words slightly to localize the text to Kansas City. The second song also uses the text of another 'It Gets Better' video by evangelist Oral Roberts' grandson Randy Robert Potts. The third song is a setting of a poem by Michael Kelly as he describes the painful and uncertain process of coming out to a family member. The last piece quotes Harvey Milk's "Hope Speech" given in 1978 at the Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco. Milk's message continues to serve as a beacon of hope and optimism. *Love Remained* serves as a thank you to pioneers in the fight for equality, a celebration of the progress made, and a poignant plea to young queer people to hold on in the face of oppression. It does get better.

I. Hold On

Based on a speech by Joel Burns

It gets better.

It gets much, much, much better.

Tonight I'd like to talk to the twelve, thirteen, and fourteen year olds in Fort Worth, Texas

Or anywhere across the country who are different.

I know that people at home or at school may not understand you

Or try to hurt you.

But please hold on,

I know life can seem unbearable

But wait. Please wait.

If only you'll wait you'll see better days ahead.

I know too well how lost and alone you feel but please,

Hold on.

There's so much life can offer.

If only I could show you.

You must hold on.

You must hold on to make your memories,

Or just to see who you will be.

If only you could know how much you are like me.

Hold on.

It gets better.

It gets much, much, much, much better.

Believe me!

One day when I was in the ninth grade, just starting Crowley High School,

I was cornered by some kids who roughed me up.

They said that I should die and go to hell where I belonged.

That erupted in me the fear that I'd kept down.

There must be something very wrong with me.

Something I could never let my family or anybody know.

I went home and...

But the story didn't end that unfortunate day.

There's so much more, there's so much more.

Yes, high school was difficult.

Coming out was painful,

But life got so much better for me.

Give yours a chance.

Hold on, you must hold on.

Just wait.

If only you'll wait you'll see better days ahead.

I know too well how lost and alone you feel

But just hold on, hold on for all that life can offer.

If only you could know.

It gets better!

II. Uncle Ronnie

Based on a letter of Randy Roberts Potts to his Uncle Ronnie

You were a light in my mother's eyes every time that she spoke your name.

You had the power to lift up her spirits, changing her mood.

A talent I could never claim.

Dear Uncle Ronnie.

And yet you could be all the many things that my mother had feared I'd be.

You could be gay, on your own, and questioning God,

You could stand far apart and still she loved you.

You could be true to every part of yourself. Only you had that privilege in our family.

Or so it seemed to me.

Dear Uncle Ronnie, I was so jealous of you.

So the thing is,

When you're that beautiful in someone's eyes,

When you're that dear...

And then you take a twenty-five caliber pistol...

And put it to your heart,

There's gonna be a tiny ripple.

I would have held you in my arms if I could.

You and I, we had everything in common...

Now the pain.

And I was only seven at the time.

III. Love Remained

Words by Michael Kelly

Running that day was easier

Than it had ever been

Barefoot impressions in the sand

Chasing us

My legs taking over for my frozen mouth

Frozen despite the endless sun

On our naked torsos

Free but anxious

He ran for fun

I ran to buy yet more time

Was this the time?

Could it be finally now?

The diamond loomed overhead

Jagged and large

It was a secret kept for years

Now the yearning to be known

Delicate the dance of a brother's bond

Ending with the words

I am with you no matter what

They ring in the salt scented air

Acceptance burned away the last of my icy fears

And all that remained between us was love.

IV. Hope

Based on a speech by Harvey Milk

Why are we here? Why are gay people here?
Why are we here? And what's happening?
My name is Harvey Milk and what's happening
Is that a gay man has been elected in San Francisco
In Dade County, we had our rights taken away
It's true, I know.
But in the weeks before that
More was written and said about gay people
Than in the history of man.
Think of that.
In 1977 we saw the dialogue start
In 1978 we must make sure the movement that's really happening continues
So that the young people in the Altoona Pennsylvanias
All the young people in the Richmond Minnesotas
Who are coming out
So that they might have hope,
All the young people
All they need is hope
For a safe place to come to
Hope for a new life to live
When the pressures at home are too great
Hope that all will be alright.
So why are we here? Why are all of us here?
Why are we here? And what's happening?
My name is Harvey Milk
And I'm here to recruit you, you, and you, and you
For if a gay person can be elected
Then that's a green light for you and you and you
You have to give them hope.

Take Care of This House from *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue*

Music by Leonard Bernstein, Words by Alan Jay Lerner, Arranged by Arnold Freed

Note from Emily: The Broadway show *1600 Pennsylvania Avenue* (1976) was a notorious flop, seeing only seven performances. Originally meant to be a commentary on racial relations and the presidents in the White House from 1800-1900, the story line and the music underwent so many revisions that the final product was drastically different from the original concept. The composer Leonard Bernstein was furious at the cuts to his musical score (which had been made without his input), and refused to make a cast recording. However, this sweet song remains. The sentiment that the White House belongs to all of us, and that it deserves special care, is especially timely. This piece was sung by opera singer Frederica von Stade, under Bernstein's baton, at President Jimmy Carter's inauguration, and it has enjoyed modest popularity in music aficionados' hearts.

Take care of this house, keep it from harm.
If bandits break in sound the alarm.
Care for this house, shine it by hand
And keep it so clean the glow can be seen all over the land.
Be careful at night, check all the doors.
If someone makes off with a dream, the dream will be yours.
Take care of this house, be always on call,
For this house is the hope of us all.

My Dearest Ruth

Music by Stacy Garrop, Words by Martin Ginsburg

Note from Neal: This piece was commissioned by James and Jane Ginsburg as one of three songs by different women composers to be presented in 2013 as an 80th birthday tribute to their mother, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The soprano who premiered the work, Patrice Michaels, is married to James Ginsburg. The text of this piece is based on Martin (Marty) Ginsburg's final written account. Written on a yellow legal pad on June 17, 2010, the incredibly honest and heartfelt letter was discovered by Ruth Bader Ginsburg as she was clearing the hospital room and preparing to move her husband home for his final few days. Martin Ginsburg's admiration for his wife and pride at seeing her progress "to the very top of the legal world" is a testament to the absolute force of their relationship and the exceptional human that was Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Some advice from the Notorious RBG: "Real change, enduring change, happens one step at a time." "Fight for the things that you care about, but do it in a way that will lead others to join you." "If you have a caring life partner, you help the other person when that person needs it. I had a life partner who thought my work was as important as his, and I think that made all the difference for me." "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made. It shouldn't be that women are the exception."

*Note— the text below is an actual transcription of Martin Ginsburg's letter. Stacy Garrop says, "Slight alterations have been made to the original text: specific dates and locations were left out in order to create a more timeless feel; a few longer sentences were broken into shorter sentences; and the repetition of "not a jot" was added at the end for dramatic effect." According to James Ginsburg, "I should note one factual error: my parents met 59 years before the date of this letter, not 56. Obviously, Dad had their 56th anniversary in mind. We chose to keep the number 56 in the song."

6/17/10

My Dearest Ruth –

You are the only person I have loved in my life, setting aside, a bit, parents and kids and their kids, and I have admired and loved you almost since the day we first met at Cornell some 56 years ago.

What a treat it has been to watch you progress to the very top of the legal world!!

I will be in JH Medical Center until Friday, June 25, I believe, and between then and now I shall think hard on my remaining health and life, and whether on balance the time has come for me to tough it out or to take leave of life because the loss of quality now simply overwhelms. I hope you will support where I come out, but I understand you may not. I will not love you a jot less.

Marty

Memory Mist

By Florence Price

Note from Emily: Florence Price (1897-1953) left a voluminous legacy of compositions in every genre, mostly unpublished, at her death. As the first African American woman composer to have her work performed by a major symphony orchestra, she was impressive enough; as a woman of great courage who left her native Arkansas for Chicago to escape racism in the South, as a woman who divorced young and became a single mother, as a composer who synthesized "white classical" idiom with the richness of African-inspired musical language, she was unique. This piece, composed 4 years before the composer's death and finally published in 2019, is a love letter from a mother to a daughter. One can imagine Price sharing her musical life in this short, eloquent work, which is dedicated to her younger daughter, Edith.

Home of the Brave

Words and Music by Ricky Ian Gordon

Note from Neal: On October 6, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old gay student at the University of Wyoming, was beaten, tortured, and left to die on a barbed-wire fence. He died from his injuries six days later. In the same month, composer Ricky Ian Gordon wrote “Home of the Brave” in response to the horrific event. The song recounts the grim details of Shepard’s murder and offers a plea for a world “where love can abide.” The song ends with a question: “Why?” Indeed, WHY are senseless, hate-driven crimes and murders still happening in today’s world at such an alarming rate? In 2018, twenty years after the murder became a worldwide symbol of the hatred harbored toward LGBTQIA+ people, a celebration of life service was held in Shepard’s memory. Presiding over the service in front of over 2,000 people was Bishop Gene Robinson, the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church. In his homily, he shared an anecdote from the first emergency responder at the scene of Shepard’s attack who said she arrived to find a deer lying next to Shepard’s body. Upon her arrival, the animal looked straight into the officer’s eyes and ran away. Bishop Robinson also told of his personally receiving a note from Shepard’s mother as he strapped on his bulletproof vest prior to his consecration as bishop. It read, “I know Matthew will be smiling down upon you tomorrow.” A funeral service for Matthew Shepard was not possible in 1998 because of anti-gay protestors. Finally, he has been shepherded home.

There was a fence. Was it a corral? Were there horses there in the chaparral?

Deep in the heart of that strange land, Wyoming.

Home of the brave.

I want to shepherd you home, Mathew, Matthew Shepard.

Two boys enticed you into desire so the girls they loved could burn you with fire.

Deep in the heart of that strange land, Wyoming.

Home of the brave.

I want to shepherd you home, Matthew, Matthew Shepard.

Over your shoulder your smile seems to say it’s OK now,

It happened the way that it had to be.

If someone must die for hate to subside, let it be me.

We were meant to be free.

All that you dreamed, to get your degree where your daddy went out in Laramie.

Deep in the heart of that strange land, Wyoming.

Home of the brave.

I want to shepherd you home, Matthew, Matthew Shepard.

Lively and quick! Was German your tongue or was Arabic?

Bred like a rose Angel Heaven knows

(though it doesn’t matter now).

There was a fence.

The boys who enticed you then dragged you there

And hung you like Christ in the frigid air

For eighteen hours.

A boy on his bike at first didn’t know.

He thought you were a scarecrow.

Oh, it hurts just to say so.

Ride a horse through, Matthew, ride!

To the other side, where they can’t ever hurt you,

Where love can abide.

Home of the brave.

I want to shepherd you home, oh, I want to shepherd you home, Matthew,

Matthew Shepard.

Why? Under so much sky.

Through the Guarded Gate

Music by Juliana Hall, Words by Margaret Widdemer

Note from Jennifer: In 2018, Seattle Art Song Society (SASS) commissioned a new work by composer Juliana Hall to be written setting the poetry of Margaret Widdemer. This piece was to accompany other music in their season to honor the voices of women. To show their solidarity and support of the brave women that manifest and march to have their voices heard in the US, SASS created a "march" of the song cycle across the country. The goal was to select mezzo-sopranos from every state to sing the piece and, in May 2019, I had the privilege of representing Missouri in the march. The poetry of the piece represents several sides of being a "modern" woman including a mother of a soldier, the brave women that fought for womens' right to vote, and any woman feeling discriminated against because of her gender.

II. A Mother to the War-Makers

This is my son that you have taken,
Guard lest your gold-vault walls be shaken,
Never again to speak or waken.

This, that I gave my life to make,
This you have bidden the vultures break—
Dead for your selfish quarrel's sake!

This that I built of all my years,
Made with my strength and love and tears,
Dead for pride of your shining spears!

Just for your playthings bought and sold
You have crushed to a heap of mold
Youth and life worth a whole world's gold—

*This was my son that you have taken,
Guard lest your gold-vault walls be shaken—
This—that shall never speak or waken!*

III. The Old Suffragist

She could have loved—her woman-passions beat
Deeper than theirs, or else she had not known
How to have dropped her heart beneath their feet
A living stepping-stone:

The little hands—did they not clutch her heart?
The guarding arms—was she not very tired?
Was it an easy thing to walk apart,
Unresting, undesired?

(continues)

She gave away her crown of woman-praise,
Her gentleness and silent girlhood grace,
To be a merriment for idle days,
Scorn for the market-place:

She strove for an unvisioned, far-off good,
For one far hope she knew she should not see:
These—not *her* daughters—crowned with motherhood
And love and beauty—free.

V. The Women's Litany

Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for our pain's sake!
Lips set smiling and face made fair
Still for you through the pain we bare,
We have hid till our hearts were sore
Blacker things than you ever bore:
Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for our pain's sake!

Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for our strength's sake!
Light held high in a strife ne'er through
We have fought for our sons and you,
We have conquered a million years'
Pain and evil and doubt and tears—
Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for our strength's sake!

Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for your own sake!
We have held you within our hand,
Marred or made as we broke or planned,
We have given you life or killed
King or brute as we taught or willed—
Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for your own sake!

Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for the world's sake!
We are blind who must guide your eyes,
We are weak who must help you rise,
All untaught who must teach and mold
Souls of men till the world is old—
Let us in through the guarded gate,
Let us in for the world's sake!

Lift Every Voice and Sing

Music by R. Rosamond Johnson, Words by James Weldon Johnson, Arranged by Horace J. Scruggs, III

Note from Neal: Often called “The Black National Anthem,” “Lift Every Voice and Sing” was written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson and set to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson in 1899. First performed in public in 1900 by 500 children at a segregated school, the song has transcended time and genre. Motown’s Kim Weston sang it in 1972 to nearly 100,000 people; Melba Moore released an all-star version with Anita Baker, Stevie Wonder, and Dionne Warwick; Gladys Knight and Bebe Winans performed the piece in 2012, and Beyoncé sang it at Coachella in 2018. Shana Redmond, a professor at UCLA who studies music, race, and politics said, “Black communities across the globe continue to be vulnerable in very unique and unsettling ways. To sing this song is to revive that past—but also to recognize, as the lyrics of the song reveal, that there is a hopeful future that might come of it.” Let us all take the pledge to *truly* lift every voice, to look *within*, to *listen*, to *call* for anti-racism, to *act*. The time is now.

Lift ev'ry voice and sing
'Til earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won.

THANKS FOR COMING

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