

Spring Concert Lyrics and Translations - Highlands Youth Ensemble

Program notes

When we started planning our repertoire for the France tour, I knew there were three things I wanted to do:

1. I wanted to commission a piece commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-day, especially since we are touring Omaha and Utah Beaches, and laying a wreath at the American Cemetery. (We actually have two singers going on the tour whose great-grandfathers were involved in Operation Overlord!)

We are so excited about premiering *The Day of Allied Voices*, and are honored to perform it in some spectacular venues in France. It is especially exciting that this work was composed by one of our MECCA alumni, Dr. Benjamin Dawson!

2. I wanted to program some music that was representative of the American people. "Rise My Soul", "Saints Bound for Heaven", "Will the Circle Be Unbroken", and "Deep River" are all pieces from our history. "Let Everything That Hath Breath" is a concert gospel piece, and the gospel genre is uniquely American.

In addition, composers Alice Parker, Susan LaBarr, and Jeffery Ames are well-known and well-loved American composers whose music I wanted to share with our audiences in France. Not to mention Dolly Parton, whose piece "The Light of a Clear Blue Morning" is set so beautifully by Craig Hella Johnson.

3. I wanted to share one of our pieces with the collaborating French choirs, and I thought that the Spiritual, Deep River is quite possibly the MOST American piece we can sing together.

We are also excited to sing two pieces in French with the choirs in France: "Cantique de Jean Racine" by Fauré, and "Aujourd'hui Je Chanterai" (Today I Will Sing) by Marie-Thérèse Robin.

With the repertoire we are singing and the new friendships we will be forming, it will truly be an Allied Voices Tour!

Jane DeLoach Morison, MECCA Artistic Director

Rise My Soul, Traditional folk hymn, text by Robert Seagrave, arranged by Susan LaBarr

Rise my soul, and take thy wings, thy better portion trace,
Rise from transitory things toward heaven, thy native place.
Sun and moon and stars decay, time shall soon this earth remove;
Rise my soul, and haste away to seats prepared above.

Rivers to the ocean run, nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun, both speed them to their source.
So my soul that's born of God longs to view his glorious face,
Forward tends to his abode, to rest in his embrace

Fly me riches, fly me cares, whilst I that coast explore;
Flattering world with all thy snares, solicit me no more.
Pilgrims fix not here their home; strangers tarry but a night.
When the last dear mornin is come, they'll rise to joyful light.

Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn, press onward to the prize;
Soon our Saviour will return triumphant in the skies:
Yet a season and you know happy entrance will be given,
All our sorrows left below, And earth exchanged for heaven.

Ubi Caritas, Ola Gjeilo

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.	Where charity and love are, God is there.
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.	The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Exsultemus et in ipso jucundemur.	Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Timeamus et amemus Deum vivum.	Let us revere and love the living God.
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.	And from a sincere heart let us love one another.
Amen.	Amen.

Psalm of Praise, Psalm 113 (Paraphrased), Jeffery Ames

Praise ye the Lord, o praise Him ye servants of the Lord.
Blessed be His name from this time forth.
Blessed be the name of the Lord forevermore.

O praise the Lord, ye servants of the Lord.
Praise Him all ye people now and forevermore.
From, the rising of the sun until the going down of the same.
So great is the Lord's name and is to be praised.

The Lord is high above all nations.
And His glory is above the heavens.
He is high and lifted up, bless his name.

Who is like unto the Lord? No one can compare to Him.
He looks down to see the heavens and the earth.
He lifts the poor and needy from the dust, and sets them among the princes of the people.
Alleluia! Praise ye the Lord!

Saints Bound for Heaven, traditional, arranged by Alice Parker

Our bondage it shall end by and by.
From Egypt's yoke set free, hail the glorious jubilee
And to Canaan we'll return by and by.

Our deliverer he shall come by and by.
And our sorrows have an end with our three-score years and ten,
And vast glory crown the day by and by.

And when to Jordan's floods we are come,
Jehovah rules and tide and the waters He'll divide,
And the ransomed host shall shout we are come.

Then with all the happy throng we'll rejoice!
Shouting Glory to our King till the vaults of heaven ring,
And through all eternity we'll rejoice!

Deep River, Spiritual, arranged by Horváth Ádám

Deep river, my home us over Jordan.
Deep river, Lord, I want to cross over into campground.

O don't you want to go to that gospel feast,
That Promised Land where all is peace?

Cantique de Jean Racine, Gabriel Fauré

Verbe égal au Très-Haut
Notre unique espérance
Jour éternel de la terre et des cieux
De la paisible nuit nous rompons le silence;
Divin Sauveur, jette sur nous les yeux.

Word, equal to (one with) the Highest,
Our only hope,
Eternal day of the earth and heavens,
We break the silence of the peaceful night;
Divine Savior, cast your eyes upon us!

Répands sur nous le feu de ta grâce puissante
Que tout l'enfer, que tout l'enfer fuie au son de ta voix
Dissipe le sommeil d'une âme languissante
Qui la conduit à l'oubli de tes lois

Spread over us the fire of your powerful grace,
That all hell may flee at the sound of your voice;
Dispel the slumber of a languishing soul,
That drives us to forget your laws.

Ô Christ soit favorable à ce peuple fidèle
Pour te bénir maintenant rassemblé
Reçois les chants qu'il offre à ta gloire immortelle.

O Christ, show favor to this faithful people
In order to bless (thank) you now.
Accept the songs offered to your immortal
glory;

Et de tes dons qu'il retourne comblé.

And may they go forth filled with your gifts.

The Day of Allied Voices, Benjamin Dawson

Composer's Note

In January 2023, Jane Morison (Artistic Director of the Mountain Empire Children's Choral Academy) asked if I would write an SATB commission to honor the soldiers and sailors who took part in the Normandy landings of 1944 (commonly known as "D-Day").

I had many reasons to find this project interesting. I was a history major in my undergraduate days and enjoy stories of people from times past. Both of my grandfathers served in World War II and I appreciate the opportunity to honor them and those of their generation. Additionally, the commissioning choir was the Highlands Youth Ensemble, a high school auditioned choral group in which I myself sang bass during 2009-2010. It was while singing with HYE that I discovered my love for writing choral music, and I have many good memories from my days with the ensemble.

After compiling the texts, I found it difficult to communicate the nature of the work to others. Explanations such as "It starts like a Mass, but also has a French poem – in French – but also has

a prayer by FDR, but also ends with a scripture passage from Isaiah, but is also about D-Day” didn’t help to assure curious onlookers that this piece would, in fact, make any sense.

Even with these seemingly disparate parts, ultimately the work is a prayer for peace. The first movement “Lord Have Mercy” cries out to God for deliverance, particularly appropriate in the setting of war, anxiety, distress and upheaval. The second movement narrows the focus to the American people in the Presidential prayer “Let Our Hearts Be Stout,” delivered by Roosevelt as the Allied Forces were on their way to the beaches.

The third movement commemorates these beaches of Normandy with the French text “Chanson d’Automne.” This poem was played over the air to covertly signal the Allied Forces that the military maneuvers of “Operation Overlord” had begun. It also reflects the pain, sorrow, and heaviness experienced by many during the war.

Movement four, “For the Fallen,” was written during the First World War – not the Second – but is beautifully applicable to memorialize any military sacrifice, regardless of time period.

The final movement, “We Will Be Glad,” offers a window of hope in the belief that ultimately it is God who will heal us and our land when we turn to Him; an answer to the cries for mercy in the first movement.

I am grateful to my long-time friend, mentor, and colleague Jane Morison, for asking me to write this piece. Jane has generously programed my music many times, and it is a privilege to have the opportunity to honor that “Greatest Generation,” to highlight the Highlands Youth Ensemble, and to offer a message of hope to the weary soul.

S.D.G.



1. Lord, have mercy

Lord, have mercy
Kyrie eleison
Christ, have mercy
Christe eleison
Lord, have mercy
Kyrie eleison

2. Let Our Hearts Be Stout (Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944)

Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our Nation
This day have set upon a mighty endeavor
Lead them straight and true
Give strength to their arms
Stoutness to their hearts Steadfastness in their faith
They will be sore tried
By night and by day, without rest
Until the victory is won

The darkness will be rent by noise and flame
Men's souls will be shaken with the violences of
war
They fight not for the lust of conquest
They fight to end conquest
They fight to liberate
They fight to let justice arise
And for us at home
Let our hearts be stout
To wait out the long travail
To bear sorrows that may come
And, O Lord, give us Faith
Faith in Thee
Faith in our sons
Faith in each other
With Thy blessing, we shall prevail
Help us to conquer
The apostles of greed and racial arrogancies
Lead us to the saving of our country
And a peace that will let all of men live in freedom
Thy will be done, Almighty God Amen

3. Chanson d'Automne (Paul Verlaine, 1866)

Les sanglots longs
Des violons
De l'automne
Blessent mon coeur
D'une langueur
Monotone.

Tout suffocant
Et blême, quand
Sonne l'heure,
Je me souviens
Des jours anciens
Et je pleure;

Et je m'en vais
Au vent mauvais
Qui m'emporte
Deçà, delà,
Pareil à la
Feuille morte

(English translation by Arthur Symons)
When a sighing begins in the violins
Of the autumn-song
My heart is drowned In the slow sound
Languorous and long

Pale as with pain
Breath fails me when
The hours toll deep
My thoughts recover
The days that are over
And I weep
And I go
Where the winds know,
Broken and brief
To and fro
As the winds blow
A dead leaf

4. For the Fallen (Laurence Binyon, 1914)

They went with songs to the battle, they were
young
Straight of limb, steady and aglow
They were staunch to the end against odds
Uncounted:
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow
old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound
Felt as a weal-spring that is hidden from sight
To the innermost heart of their own land they are
known
As the stars are known to the Night

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our
Darkness
To the end, to the end, they remain.

5. We Will Be Glad (Isaiah 25:6-9)

In this mountain, the LORD of hosts will make all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of choice wines, of fat things full of marrow, of well refined choice wines.

He will destroy in this mountain the surface of the covering that covers all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

He has swallowed up death in victory. The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces. He will take the reproach of his people away from off all the earth, for the LORD has spoken it.

It shall be said in that day, "Look, this is our God. We have waited for him, and he will save us. This is the LORD. We have waited for him. We will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

The Light of a Clear Blue Morning, Dolly Parton, Arranged by Craig Hella Johnson

It's been a long dark night, and I've been waiting for the morning.
It's been a long hard fight, but I see a brand new day a-dawning.
I've been looking for the sunshine 'cause I ain't seen it in so long.
Everything's gonna work out fine, everything's gonna be alright, it's gonna be okay.

I can see the light of a clear blue morning. I can see the light of a brand new day.
I can see the light of a clear blue morning. Everything's gonna be alright, it's gonna be okay.

Will the Circle Be Unbroken, Traditional Appalachian, lyrics by Betsy Rose, Cathy Winter, and Marcia Taylor, arranged by J. David Moore

Will the circle be unbroken, by and by, Lord, by and by.
There's a better home a'waiting in the sky, Lord, in the sky.

I was singing with my sisters, and my brothers, I was singing with my friends.
And we all can sing together, 'cause the circle never ends.

I was born down in the valley where the sun refused to shine.
But. I'm climbing up to the highland, gonna make that mountain mine.

Let Everything That Hath Breath, Jeffery Ames

Sing unto the Lord a new song.
Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Declare His glory among the nations.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord!

Magnify the Lord with me and exalt His name together.
Hallelujah, bless His name for He's worthy to be praised.
Clap your hands, all ye people. Shout with a voice of triumph.
For the night Lord is great and greatly to be praised!

Come on and praise the Lord. Let's all praise His name.
Give Him the highest praise.

Praise Him with the timbrel, praise Him with the dance.
Stand up on your feet and just lift up holy hands.
Sing "Hallelujah," praise His holy name.
For the Lord is worthy to be praised!