

HAMILTON COLLEGE CHOIR

presents

FOREST *of* HOPE

December 6, 2025 - 7:30 pm

Program

*Please note: *** indicates an opportunity for applause*

Now, Eternal

Moira Smiley (b. 1976)

Brigit Cook, *vocal solo*
Patricia Higgins, *violin*
Catherine Hicks, *accordion*

Locus Iste WAB 23

Anton Bruckner (1825-1896)

When the Earth Stands Still

Don MacDonald (b. 1966)

Tyger

Emil Råberg (b. 1985)

Alice Riley, *soprano*

This is the Day

Stanford Scriven (b. 1988)

“Die Nachtigall” no. 4 from *Sechs Lieder* Op. 59

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

okâwîmâw askîy (Mother Earth)

Sherryl Sewepagaham

To Propagate a Home

Ayanna Woods (b. 1993)

Abby Rich, *percussion*
Tina Toglia, *piano*

Oihu Hau

David Azurza (b. 1968)

Sophie Gordon and Alice Riley, *soprano duet*
Charles Collett, Catherine Hicks, Oliver Nathanielsz and Julia Ramsey, *percussion*

Carissima

Fabio Campana (1815-1882)

Patricia Higgins, HCC president, *conductor*

Projections and image curation by Sophie Gordon and Charlotte Botha

Late arrivals will be seated at appropriate intervals. Food and beverages are not allowed in Wellin Hall. Please turn off phones and other devices. Schambach Center is a smoke-free building.

Program notes

Our *Forest of Hope* program is an exploration of the Japanese mindfulness practice shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) through the medium of group vocal music and visual memories of nature. The music in this program seeks to illustrate concepts of this practice, such as beauty found in the interplay of sunlight leaking through trees (*komorebi*), the celebration of imperfection and impermanence (*wabi sabi*), and experiences so beautiful that our emotional responses are too deep and powerful for words (*yūgen*).

Moira Smiley's *Now, Eternal* is a prayer for presence and patience in the style of Appalachian folk hymns. Following this opening meditation by the small ensemble, the full choir introduces Anton Bruckner's *Locus Iste*, a motet often sung at the dedication of a sacred building, like a new church. The students were invited to share images they have taken of places in nature they deem sacred. The set closes with Don MacDonald's *When the Earth Stands Still*, performed in a garland formation, as if lying still on one's back in a small clearing in the forest, gazing at the sky through an opening in the tree canopy.

The second set opens with Emil Råberg's rhythmically intense setting of the *Tyger* by William Blake. The music evokes a sense of uncertainty and anxiety through syncopated ambiguity and indistinct modal chants, emanating from the "forest of the night." In contrast, it is followed by an abundantly serene setting of *This is the Day*. Stanford Scriven explains that when setting this devotional passage by Bahá'í Faith founder Baha'u'llah, he was "instantly touched by the sheer magnitude and power of the message, as well as its elegance and grace," adding "this piece is my best musical translation of that sensation."

The bird in Felix Mendelssohn's *Die Nachtigall* does not learn anything new with the changing of seasons. She only sings the songs she knows and loves. The Woodland Cree text of *okâwîmâw askîy* however, does ask us to learn and adapt our long-term goals as stewards of the earth. This call to stand in unity, love, and hope aligns with the Seven Generations Principle of our local Oneida Nation. The message of hope is continued by Ayanna Woods's *To Propagate a Home*, an ode to the faith, vision, and hard work it takes to build new roots with your own two hands.

David Azurza's *Oihu hau* celebrates the folk music that stemmed from the apple-picking communities in the Basque Country. The ethereal picture of apple blossoms and snow floating in the air, is interrupted by festive declarations of hope, accompanied by the banging of implements like fruit pickers. Our Basque exchange student Eneko Arbaud was particularly helpful in translating Lizardi's metaphors for the changing seasons and the passage of time.

As always, we invite any former members of the Hamilton College Choir to join us in singing our alma mater, *Carissima*.

Texts and translations

Now, Eternal

Now, eternal, hold me calm,
Labor and worry turn to a song.

Eyes close, darkness now can show
My mind to still, my heart to know.

Gratitude for living now—
Below the anxious thoughts of how.

To win, to learn, to hurt, to heal:
It's love, below all that I feel.

Below the warring beats of fear
The quiet song of love is here.

— Moira Smiley

Locus Iste

Locus iste a Deo factus est,
Inaestimabile sacramentum,
irreprehensibilis est.

This place was made by God,
a priceless sacrament;
it is without reproach.

— Liber Usualis, trans. Emmanuel Music

When the Earth Stands Still

Come listen in the silence of the moment before rain comes down.
There's a deep sigh in the quiet of the forest and the tall tree's crown.

Now hold me.
Will you take the time to hold me and embrace the chill?
Or miss me,
will you take the time to miss me when the earth stands still?

Cause there's no use running
cause the storm's still coming
and you've been running for too many years.

Come listen in the silence of the moment before shadows fall.
Feel the tremor of your heartbeat matching heartbeat as we both dissolve.

Now hold me....

Cause there's no use running
cause the storm's still coming
and you've been running for too many years.

So stay with me, held in my arms
Like branches of a tree
They'll shelter you for many years.

— Don MacDonald (2016)

The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat.
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp.
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

— William Blake (1757-1827), Songs of Experience (1794)

This is the Day

This is the Day in which God's most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness.

— Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah (1935)

Die Nachtigall

Die Nachtigall, sie war entfernt,
Der Frühling lockt sie wieder;
Was neues hat sie nicht gelernt,
Singt alte, liebe Lieder.

The nightingale was far away,
But the spring has tempted her once again;
She has not learned anything new,
So sings old, beloved songs.

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832), *Einzelne*, no. 3, trans. Michael P. Rosewall

okâwîmâw askîy (Mother Earth)

okâwîmâw askîy
nîyanân kitawâsim sak
kisâkihitinan

Mother Earth
We are your children
We love you

— Sherryl Sewepagaham, Woodland Cree text (2021)

To Propagate a Home

We must have uncommon strength to face the wound
and refuse to let it wither.

We must have uncommon faith to plunge our hands into the land
and nurture an abandoned place.

They say it's a lost cause—
they haven't seen the new roots
weaving through the dark.

They say it isn't worth it—
they haven't watched with joy
as each new bud emerges.

When they cut off a branch that they say is dying,
it takes uncommon faith to grow.

These roots have never forgotten
how to grab hold of the soil.

This branch has never forgotten
how to reach up toward the sky.

— Ayanna Woods (2019)

Oihu Hau

Sagasti berri, sagasti zuri,
inguma-atsegintokia iduri,
elurte arian geldia!

Bekik hiretzat oihu alai hau:
sagasti, hiretzat; bereizki baihau
jaiez jantzi zorna berriak!
Bizitza duk ageri garretan...
Bizitza, leher-berri, adarretan...
Higan dik sort-ohea Udaberriak!

There is snow in the air
It seems like a pleasant place
Standing in the air, a new apple orchard, a white apple tree

It seems like a place of pleasure, motionless in the snow.
This joyful cry is for you
The apple orchard is especially for you
Dress for the occasion
Spring is in you and life is blazing in the branches
Use your strength to harvest and play the apple games
This joyful cry if for you
Celebrate! The apple orchard is all for you!

— Xabier Lizardi (1896–1933), excerpts from *Biotz-begietan* (The Seasons of the Year in my Eye)
trans. Eneko Arbaud, Hamilton College Choir member

Carissima

Dear is thy homestead, glade and glen,
Fair is the light that crowns thy brow;
Gather we close to thee again,
Mother, all loving thou hast been,
Our own sweet Lady thou! Our own sweet Lady thou!

Haunting our hearts in absent days,
Calling us back from stress and storm,
Tenderly all thy good old ways
Shine in thy smiles; be love thy praise!
Thine arms are ever warm. Thine arms are ever warm.

Memory still shall close enfold,
Bringing us joys of days of yore;
Faith shall thy constant fame uphold,
While years, Carissima, grow cold.
We love thee evermore. We love thee evermore.

— President Melancthon Woolsey Stryker (1901)

Collaborative pianist

Tina Toglia, DMA, is a native of Philadelphia, PA. and holds degrees from SUNY Stony Brook, Curtis Institute of Music, and Temple University. An avid collaborative pianist, she has recorded art songs with Hamilton soprano, Lauralyn Kolb, for New World Records, and performed extensively throughout the US. She has recently retired as a Lecturer in Piano at Hamilton.

Conductor

Charlotte Botha serves as Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Music at Hamilton College, where she conducts the Hamilton Voices and the College Choir, and teaches courses in music theory and cultural musicology. Her research interests include foreign-language choral diction, multimedia choral performance, and equitable practices for including the music of and by marginalized communities in choral programs. Her recent guest conducting invitations include the Twin Ports Choral Project (MN), the University of Johannesburg, Ball State University (IN), and All-State choirs in Alabama, Missouri, and Texas. Her Choral Ubuntu and Nguni diction research was recently featured at the NY-ACDA, Westminster Choir College, and Chorus America conferences. She holds a DMA from The University of North Texas, an MMus from Nelson Mandela University, and a BMus from the University of Pretoria. As an ardent collaborator, she believes in the power of music to deepen understanding and respect between people.

Hamilton College Choir members

*denotes the small ensemble

Soprano 1

Juliet Koechel '28
Emma Larralde '29
Alice Riley '27
Mirix Robertson-Leich '27
Peicen Yan '28

Soprano 2

Anna Bruner '29
*Macy Carter '28
Lena Davidson '29
Anna Duarte '26
Abby Feldman-Lewis '29
Helen Gass '29
Sophie Gordon '26
Kelsey Kirkwood '29
Isabella Poh '29
Dylan Rich '28
Ambika Sharma '28
Carolyn Snowman '28
*Kate Thum '28

Alto 1

Sam Bender '29
*Brigit Cook '27
Celeste Davila '29
Jolie Hall '27
Catherine Hicks '28
Patricia Higgins '26
Liviya Hoskinson '28
Olive Magowan '29
Caroline McGraw '26
Oliver Nathanielsz '26
Julia Ramsay '26
*Anwyn Thomenius '28
*Anna Totilca '27
Kat Zidow '29

Alto 2

*Norma Callejas '26
Lily Eshaghoff '28
Lucy Hall '29
Jaeden Knowles '26
Kathryn Mor '28
Kim Perez '29
Chloë Richards-Boeff '28
*Emma Ruccio '26
D'Avora Williams '29
Stella Zhang '29

Tenor 1

Charles Collett Asst Prof. of Physics
Xander Despres '28
Zion Garris '29
Gideon Kobeia '27
*Daniel Rodriguez Vergara '26
Owen Wilson '28

Tenor 2

Brendan Byrne '26
David Giron '29
Andrew Keslow '29
Jonathan Moon '29
Xander Pitts '28

Baritone

Aaron Butler '26
Aubrey Campbell '26
Isaac Gruneich '29
Calvin Johnson '29
Ian Smith '28
*Aidan Stanton-Brand '28
Joaquin Torres III '29

Bass 2

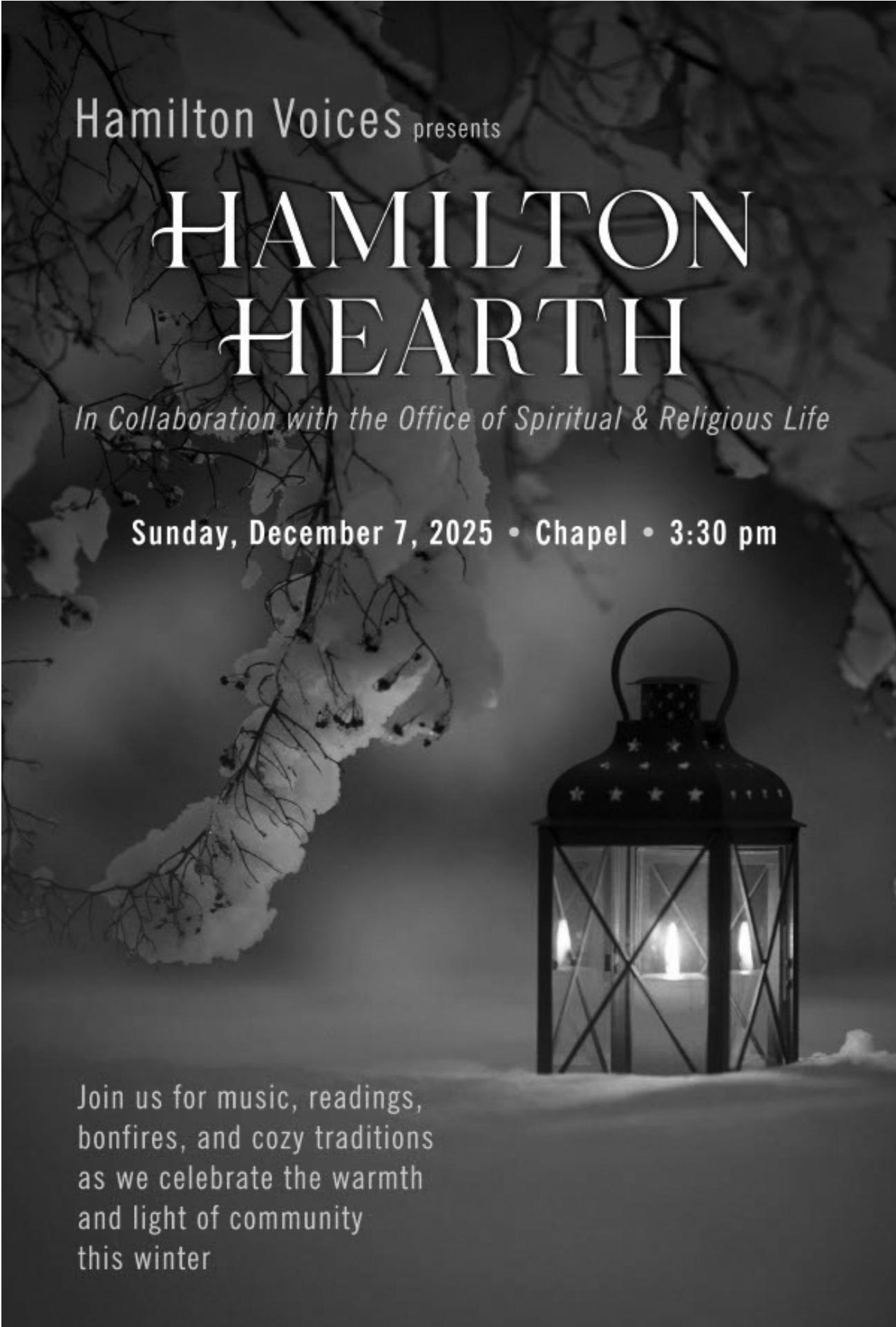
*Ben Amstislavskiy '27
Eneko Arbaud '26
*Gavyn Burgdoff '29
Ben Cooper '28
Roark Durden '29
*Garrett Hardt '28
*Daniel Titus '28
Sheldon Wan '29

Hamilton Voices presents

HAMILTON HEARTH

In Collaboration with the Office of Spiritual & Religious Life

Sunday, December 7, 2025 • Chapel • 3:30 pm



Join us for music, readings,
bonfires, and cozy traditions
as we celebrate the warmth
and light of community
this winter