

Hamilton Voices Ensemble

presents

# Heavenly Bodies

Music of Mystics, Muses, and Gods

Sunday, December 4, 2022, 2pm  
Wellin Hall, Schambach Center

Flowing from the firmament forth to the ocean,  
Healing all in earth and air, never halting.  
Indra, Lord of Heav'n formed their courses,  
Indra's mighty laws can never be broken.  
Cleansing waters flow ye on, hasten and help us.

Knower of all on earth and sea,  
Whose dread command no man may shun,  
Varuna, sovran Lord is He.

Onward, ye waters, onward hie,  
Dance in the bright beams of the sun,  
Obey the ruler of the sky  
Who dug the path for you to run.  
— Rig Veda, trans. Gustav Holst

“Grausam erweist sich Amor,” Op. 113, *13 Kanons für Frauenstimmen*, no. 2

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

*Grausam erweist sich Amor an mir! O, spielet, ihr Musen,  
Mit den Schmerzen, die er, spielend, im Busen erregt.*  
— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, trans. Emily Ezust

Cruelly Love reveals himself to me! Oh play, you Muses,  
With the sorrows that, playing, he stirs in my breast.

“Le Tre Grazie Venere”, Il primo libro de madrigali, 2–5vv

Barbara Strozzi (1619–1677)

Soloists: Anna Skrobala, Jules Mancuso, Alyssa Samuels  
Harpsichord: Tina Toglia

*Bella madre d'Amore  
anco non ti ramembra  
che nuda avesti di bellezze il grido,*

Beautiful mother of love,  
have you forgotten that you were nude  
when you carried away the prize for beauty

*In sul Troiano lido  
dal giudice Pastore?*

on the Trojan shore,  
in the shepherd's judgment?

*Onde se nuda piaci  
In sin à gl'occhi de bifolchi ide  
vanarella che sei,  
perché vuoi tu con tanti adobbi e tanti  
ricoprirti a gl'amanti?*

So if nude you pleased  
the eyes of the herdsmen of Mount Ida,  
vain that you are,  
why do you conceal yourself from lovers  
with so many ornaments?

*O vesti le tue Grazie e i nudi Amori  
o getta ancor tu fuori  
gl'arnesi I manti e i veli:  
di quelle care membra  
nulla si celi.*

Either clothe your graces and the naked cupids,  
or you too cast away  
the attires, robes and veils:  
Let nothing be hidden  
of those dear limbs.

*Tu ridi e non rispondi  
Ab tu le copri sì tu le nascondi  
Che sai ch'invoglia più che più s'apprezza  
la negata bellezza.*

You laugh and don't answer?  
Ah, you cover them, you conceal them,  
for you know that more enticing,  
more valued is beauty that is withheld.

— Giulio Strozzi, trans. Richard Kolb

Uyinkosi yamakhosi

Arr. Zamile Mzizi (b. 1987)

*UyiNkosi yamakhosi, ungumdali walomblaba  
Zonke' izizwe zibabaza ubukhulu baKho  
UyiNkosi yamakhosi, ungumdali walomblaba  
Zonke' izizwe zidumisa Wena  
Hallelujah, Amen*

You are King of kings, creator of the earth  
All nations extol Your greatness  
You are King of kings, creator of the earth  
All nations magnify You  
Hallelujah, Amen

A Prayer for Peace

Paula Foley Tillen (b. 1958)

In beauty, sitting on a lotus flower,  
Lord Buddha, quiet and solid.  
Your humble disciple,  
calm and pure of heart,  
forms a lotus flower with the hands,  
and offers this heartfelt prayer:

Homage to all Buddhas in the ten directions.  
Because of your love for all people, have compassion on us.  
Help us to remember we are just one family, North and South.  
Help us rekindle our compassion and brotherhood.  
May your compassion help us overcome our hatred.  
Humbly, we offer our hearts to you.  
Water the flowers of our spirits  
with your deep understanding.  
Help our hearts grow light.  
Because of your love for all people, please have compassion on us.

May the merit of this prayer be transformed into peace.  
May each of us realize this, our deep aspiration.  
— Thich Nhat Nanh

Antiphon for Divine Wisdom, R 466rb “O Virtus Sapientie”

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179)

Soloists: Oliver Nathanielsz, Kate Burnham

*O virtus Sapientie,  
que circuiens circuisti,  
comprehendendo omnia  
in una via que habet vitam,  
tres alas habens,  
quarum una in altum volat  
et altera de terra sudat  
et tertia undique volat.  
Laus tibi sit, sicut te decet, O Sapientia.*

O Wisdom's energy!  
Whirling, you encircle  
and everything embrace  
in the single way of life.  
Three wings you have:  
one soars above into the heights,  
one from the earth exudes,  
and all about now flies the third.  
Praise be to you, as is your due, O Wisdom.

— Trans. Nathaniel M. Campbell

*I himmelen, i himmelen,  
där Herren Gud själv bor  
hur härlig bliver sällbeten,  
hur utsägligt stor!*

In heaven's hall, in heaven's hall,  
where God the Lord resides  
what utter joy what pleasure there  
where happiness abides!

*Där ansikte mot ansikte  
jag evigt, evigt Gud får se  
se Herren Sebaot.*

And here are we, now face to face  
where God eternal fills the space  
the Lord, the Lord of Host.

*I himmelen, i himmelen,  
vad klarhet, hög och ren!  
Ej sjäva solen liknar den  
uti sitt middagskeen.*

In heaven's hall, in heaven's hall,  
what crystal purity!  
Not even the sun in clarity  
can shine as bright as He.

*Den sol, som aldrig nedergår  
och evigt oförmörkad står  
är Herren Sebaot.*

Who is the sun that never sets  
He never even darkened gets  
He is the Lord of Hosts.

*I himmelen, i himmelen,  
vad sälla utan tal!  
Av änglarna och helgonen  
vad glans i ärans sal!*

In heaven's hall, in heaven's hall,  
the blessed gather there!  
And there the saints and angels wear  
a sheen and haloed hair!

*Min själ skall bliva dessa lik  
av evighetens skatter rik  
hos Herren Sebaot.*

My soul, your soul shall ever be  
Enriched for all eternity  
by God, the Lord of Hosts.

— Laurentius Laurinus, trans. Linda Schenck

In preparing for *Heavenly Bodies*, the members of Hamilton Voices Ensemble explored the meaning of “heaven” through their personal relationships with spirituality and as a mythical, cultural, or religious dwelling place. We considered how each of our bodies are a vessel for an unmistakable and unique sound, and how the building of the ensemble’s “body” can take on different sonic shapes based on our placement and intentions. The music allowed us to have conversations about the sacred nature of bodies, to learn from one another, and to learn from those who have left us messages in art and religious texts throughout the centuries.

Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the *Rig Veda* contains 1000 sacred hymns of praise. It is the first “genre” of the four canonical sacred texts of Hinduism known as Vedas. Holst, who purchased a copy of the second edition of Ralph Thomas Hotchkin Griffith’s English translation in 1907 decided to learn Sanskrit and make a translation of his own. This assisted him to gain a deeper appreciation of the imagery and ideas of the original text, and develop the heavenly musical expression of his *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*.

The 13 canons of opus 113 form part of the Brahms “legacy” collection—works published in between when he announced his retirement and his return to composing. Several of the canons date back to his time as conductor of the Hamburg Women’s Chorus in the 1860s, and the combined set has long been a staple in the repertoire of soprano-alto choirs. Throughout the set, Love is personified in various forms. The first two canons use short Goethe texts, starting with “Divine Morpheus, in vain you stir up the lovely poppies; My eyes will remain wakeful, unless Love closes them.” The second focuses on Love’s cruelty.

While the number of Graces—or Charites—traditionally described in the retinue of Venus or Aphrodite have varied, most texts, starting from the 6th century B.C.E, identify them as three goddesses of fertility, charm, beauty, nature, goodwill, and creativity. In Greek mythology, they were commonly associated with the underworld. Often depicted naked and entwined or dancing, their role is to attend other gods and muses at feasts, and make them more

enticing and seductive. Strozzi, a virtuosic singer and composer, published more vocal chamber works than any of her contemporaries. As the adopted, and likely illegitimate daughter of poet Giulio Strozzi, she was welcomed for discussions and performances “Accademia degli Unisoni.” Until recently it was mistakenly assumed that she attended the meetings as a courtesan.

UyiNkosi yamakhosi is a popular isiZulu gospel song of praise from South Africa. Mzizi’s arrangement for three-part voices was transcribed in 2005, when she taught it to the women of the University of Pretoria Camerata by rote.

Thich Nhat Nanh explains that the text of Tiller’s *Prayer for Peace* was used throughout South Vietnam in 1965 in the “Don’t Shoot Your Own Brother” campaign to rouse the willingness to work for peace. “During meetings of young people, we chanted this poem, uniting our hearts and our efforts to continue to work for peace. Most of us were Buddhists, This chant aims at reconciliation and stopping war. It was a very powerful way of working for communication. This is something we can share with our Western friends.”

Like Caritas (Divine Love), Sapientia (Divine Wisdom) appears several times in the visions of medieval abbess, polymath, and mystic Hildegard von Bingen. The imagery of the three circling wings has clear connotations to the Holy Trinity: The Father soaring in the heavens; the Son upon earth; and the Holy Spirit surrounding all.

Rehnqvist’s *I Himmelen* incorporates an archaic form of Swedish folks singing called “kulning”. It is traditionally used outdoors to call animals and communicate with other people across long distances. The technique requires a loud and piercing tone, without vibrato. The kulning is performed by Kate Burnham, Jules Mancuso, Alyssa Samuels, and Anna Skrobala. Additional voices mimic rustic church bells or the bells found around the necks of cows and sheep. These bell tones are sung by Jaiden Knowles, Alex Herr, Julia Ramsey, Patricia Higgins, and Oliver Nathanielsz. The piece ends with an extremely high bell overtone sung by Shraddha Datta. The melody is taken from a Swedish folk chorale from Skattungbyn.

#### Hamilton Voices Ensemble

Fall ‘22

Kate Burnham  
Isa Cardoso  
Shraddha Datta  
Alex Herr  
Helen Higgins  
Patricia Higgins  
Jenn Klix  
Jaiden Knowles  
Catherin Li

Jules Mancuso  
Oliver Nathanielsz  
Julia Ramsey  
Alyssa Samuels  
Anna Skrobala  
Kat Tsaryova  
Aubrey Wallen  
Brielle Whalen  
Cynthia Yang

Direction: Charlotte Botha

Piano and Harpsichord: Tina Toglia

Lighting: Christian Bradley

*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.*