

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS  
**JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®**

School of Music

*presents*

**~Proud of You~**

featuring

**Guest Composer**  
**Dr. Ingrid Stölzel**

**The Madison Singers**  
**The JMU Chorale**

**Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director***

**Dr. Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *conductor***  
**Addison Walton, *graduate conductor***

**Amy Robertson, *collaborative pianist***  
**Elizabeth Williams, *collaborative pianist***

**Sophie Castro, Nick Gomez-Colon, *vocal soloists***  
**Drew Dodson, *guitar, bass***

Friday, April 19, 2024

8 pm

Concert Hall



## Program

### The Madison Singers

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director*  
Elizabeth Williams, *collaborative pianist*

The Sixty-Seventh Psalm Charles Ives (1874-1954)  
Addison Walton, *graduate conductor*

*Agnus Dei* Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)  
Dr. Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *conductor*

Field of Dreams Music by Ingrid Stölzel (b. 1971)  
Poetry by J. van der Vat-Chromy  
*World Premiere*

*Shen khar venakhi* (You are a Vineyard) Trad. Georgian Folk Song  
text by King Demetre I

*Alilo* (Alleluia) Traditional Georgian Folk Song  
As taught to us by Kitka

### The JMU Chorale

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director*  
Amy Robertson, *collaborative pianist*

The Blue Ridge Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)

Jenny Nick Myers (b. 1989)  
Addison Walton, *graduate conductor*

*Gate, Gate* (Gone, Gone) Brian Tate (b. 1992)

### The Combined Choirs

Still Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)  
Dr. Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *conductor*

I Will Be Here Steven Curtis Chapman (b. 1962), arr. K. Shaw  
*Dedicated to our JMU First Family: Jon, Marianne, and Eleanor Alger*  
Drew Dodson, *bass*

Proud of You Brad Skistimas (b. 1983), arr. Nick Gomez-Colon  
Sophie Castro and Nick Gomez-Colon, *vocal soloists*  
Drew Dodson, *guitar*

JMU Alma Mater #2 James Riley (1938-1987)

## Program Notes

Welcome! Our concert theme – **Proud of You** – is a gratitude-filled tribute to the singers on stage for their incredible successes this academic term and year, including the presentation of now Dr. Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos's DMA Lecture Recital in February, our tremendous collaboration with the JMU Symphony Orchestra in Ralph Vaughan Williams, "Toward the Unknown Region," in March, our choral presentation and performance at the OAKE (Organization of American Kodály Educators) **National** Conference in Chicago during Spring Break, our exuberant collaboration with visiting choral ensemble *Kitha in April*, as well as the many run-out concerts, invited performances, operas (!) recitals, juries, compositions, arrangements, and everything! (Plus, these singers are so much fun in rehearsals!) Tonight, we are also very proud to acknowledge and thank our **JMU First Family, Jon, Marianne, and Eleanor Alger**, for their many years of service and dedication to JMU! The choral area has been honored to sing for the Alger's on many occasions during their tenure, both on campus and at the residence during the Christmas season. Thank you, President Alger, for your devotion and commitment to JMU, the School of Music, and the Choral Area and for teaching us to 'think big' as we bring JMU 'Duke Energy' to all we sing and do. You are loved and will be missed.

Charles Ives is regarded as one of America's most unique and noteworthy composers. A self-proclaimed "weekend composer," Ives had a strong streak of Yankee practicality (he came from a long line of successful businessmen and entrepreneurs) and realized that he was unlikely to earn a living from the kind of music he wanted to compose. Ives entered the newly burgeoning insurance business, eventually founding a very successful agency and becoming a nationally recognized expert on tax law. By the time he entered Yale at 20, Ives was already a virtuoso organist, an accomplished pianist, and a well-known composer. One can only imagine what his church choir must have thought when, in 1898 (!), he presented them with **The Sixty-seventh Psalm**, in which, without accompaniment, the treble voices were to sing predominantly in C major and the tenor/bass section in G minor simultaneously! His younger contemporaries Henry Cowell and Sidney Robertson Cowell describe the effect as "mysterious grandeur." Given the extraordinary complexities of his piece, however, we cannot be surprised that even Ives "had difficulty in the New Haven choirs" when he asked them to sing it! However, Ives recounted that among his numerous Psalm settings, his father regarded Psalm 67 as "the best for singing in church." These harmonic demands may prove challenging for smaller church choirs today, but they remain worthy of this numinous musical offering.

### **The Sixty-Seventh Psalm**

God be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us;  
That thy way may be known upon earth, Thy saving health among all nations.

Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy:  
for Thou shalt judge the people righteously,  
and govern the nations upon the earth.

Let the people praise Thee, O God; Let all the people praise Thee.

Then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us.

God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

Composer Ola Gjeilo says of his *Agnus Dei*: "The original version of *Agnus Dei*, called *Agnus Dei: Phoenix*, was written for the Phoenix Chorale in 2010. After a few years, the piece had evolved into something more condensed and introspective that felt like the essence of the piece, bookended by the peaceful opening theme." This peacefulness that Gjeilo refers to stems from both the harmonically ambiguous nature of the opening measures and the lack of a strong melodic line. Harmonically, the A section of *Agnus Dei*

is dominated by the presence of the Mixolydian mode and, subsequently, a sense of modal mixture. Combined with a homorhythmic texture, these modes contribute to the section's overall ethereal and otherworldly feel. While Gjeilo does not counter this impression in the B section, a new, highly disjunct, lightly harmonized melodic pattern gives the impression of a Gregorian chant. This chant soon bursts into a homophonic outcry for mercy as the choir utters the words "*Miserere nobis*" ("Have mercy upon us"), revisiting the Mixolydian harmonic landscape once again. The climax of the B section – and the entire piece – is defined by a breathtaking enharmonic modulation that strikingly emphasizes the importance of this plea once more. The composer uses the A' section's tranquility to deliver the piece's final words ("Grant us Thy peace"). Once more, the prevalence of the Mixolydian mode and its relative harmonic ambiguity, together with the spaced voicing of the final chord, validate the introspective character of the piece that Gjeilo strove to set.

*Agnus Dei*

*qui tollis peccata mundi*

*miserere nobis;*

*Agnus Dei*

*qui tollis peccata mundi*

*dona nobis pacem.*

Lamb of God

who takest away the sins of the world

have mercy upon us;

Lamb of God

who takest away the sins of the world

grant us Thy peace.

**Field of Dreams** stems from a new friendship that began in 2022 when the JMU Composition Area brought composer Ingrid Stölzel to campus. Working with Ingrid, singing her music, brought with it an instant connection. When an opportunity arose to commission choral music for JMU, working with Ingrid was an immediate choice! During our first meeting to discuss the collaboration, Ingrid surprised me; she had found online a 'curricular' poem that my MUED 376 music education classes had inspired; she said she loved it! Wow! It had never been my plan to set this poem to music, but Ingrid did it! Her juxtaposition of rhythmic complexities and elements of contemporary tone painting (whole tone scales for 'wholeness') merge within a harmonic landscape that exquisitely elucidates the "field of dreams." Our premier tonight was made possible by the generous support of the JMU 2021-2022 Shirley Hanson Roberts '56 and Richard D. Roberts Endowment for Faculty Excellence.

### **The Field of Dreams**

Dreaming is the longing; love is the spark;

dreams are the field; the field is the key.

Creating is the process, and expression, the sharing.

Flow is the dreaming's gift.

Change is the constant; wholeness is the alchemy;

oneness, the coherence; beingness, the key.

Experience is the knowing and evolution, the purpose.

Growth is the dreaming's trek.

Dreaming is the longing; love is the spark;

dreams are the field; the field is the key.

You are the dream. You are the field.

You are the Field of Dreams.

What an incredible collaboration we had with visiting choral ensemble Kitka! In our Georgian selections, you will hear the authentic vocal technique we learned from this amazing group of singers and scholars!

Dating back at least 1000 years, *Shen khar venakhi* (You are a Vineyard) is a song of praise to the Virgin Mary. Today, it is often sung at Georgian weddings in honor of the bride.

You are a vineyard blossoming.  
Young and good, springing up in Eden.  
A fragrant poplar, growing in paradise.  
May God adorn you; none is more worthy of praise.  
You yourself are the sun brilliantly shining.

*Alilo*, a Georgian Christmas carol, is a cognate for *Alleluia* and is the general term for any Georgian Christmas carol. Such carols stem from a tradition similar to the Western caroling tradition where villagers wander through the village, singing and sharing news of Christmas. They are often invited in and given food, drink, and gifts. This song was first sourced and recorded in 1967 in the Georgian village of Tsalenjikha by Yvette Grimaud, a French musicologist conducting fieldwork in Georgia. This double choir work is exciting to sing, full of energy, joy, and improvised ornamentation.

May Christ bring us Christmas! We are the heralds of Christmas!  
On the twenty-fifth of the month, Christ was born in Bethlehem.  
May our host prosper! It's time for a sweet dinner! May peace be here!

Composer Elaine Hagenberg's 2019 composition, **The Blue Ridge**, sets Harriet Monroe's stunning poem about an evening in the Blue Ridge Mountains with crystal-clear melodies, fervent harmonies, and a smooth piano accompaniment that match the grandeur of these mountain vistas. The ascending and descending opening lines trace the mountains' silhouette against the sky while treble and bass voices draw us by turn to view each detail of the scene and listen for the wisdom of the mountains.

Fluid vocal lines and a sensitive text shine in Nick Myers' *Jenny*, a powerful, heartfelt recollection of a lost loved one. Poignantly capturing the essence of love that lives forever, this work is both touching and haunting. "Quietly, the strain falls out of tune. Shadows steal across a lonely moon. I miss you so..."

**Gate gate.** Joyful energy, dance-like rhythms, effective handclaps, and shifting meters come together in this exuberant choral feature by Brian Tate that is based on a Buddhist heart sutra (mantra) pertaining to transition and enlightenment. Repetitive melodies dance freely through alternating meters, while the piano accompaniment provides color and flair. A macaronic setting of both Sanskrit and English, the opening is imitative of Tibetan monks frightening away dark spirits as souls cross over the bridge of life into the joys of moving into the light.

*Gate* = gone, *paragate* = gone to the other side of the river, *sam* = everybody,  
*svaha* = halleluiah, *bodhi*= light, awakening, and inside.

"Gone, gone, all the way gone over, everyone gone to the other shore,  
enlightenment, alleluia!"

Originally composed as a short piece for solo piano, Ola Gjeilo's *Still* was included on his 2020 album *Night*. Due to its immediate success, a choral arrangement of the piece for 8-part mixed choir and harp or piano was commissioned by renowned choral ensemble VOCES8. The title of this vocalize alludes to imagery and scenery associated with the tranquility and serenity of nighttime – as the title of the piano album suggests. The musical underscoring that the composer employs to depict this stillness is centered around the Dorian mode and the repetition of a four-chord harmonic pattern throughout

the entirety of the piece. The combination of this modal harmonic landscape with the vowels sung by the choir contributes to an especially nebulous and mystical experience that feels both unsettling and cathartic at the same time. At the end of its climactic B section, Gjeilo returns to *Still's* initial harmonic pattern, thus suggesting a simple yet convincingly outlined ternary form (A-B-A'). The stillness of night fades away in absolute silence, demonstrating the piece's ambiguous nature for one last time.

American contemporary Christian music singer Steven Curtis Chapman is an award-winning songwriter, record producer, actor, author, and social activist. A five-time Grammy award winner, Chapman is the recipient of 59 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards, more than any single artist in history. His songs of hope have also crossed genres, seeing collaborations with, among others, Glenn Campbell, Gary LeVox of Rascal Flatts, Ricky Skaggs, Brad Paisley, and Mitchell Tenpenny. The 2022 recipient of the BMI Icon Award, Chapman is the first Christian music songwriter to receive the honor, joining an elite list that includes Dolly Parton, Sting, Paul Simon, Carole King, and Stevie Nicks. In 2023, Chapman received his 50th Career #1 in Radio Award. Chapman wrote **I Will Be Here**, a heartfelt ballad about love and commitment for his wife, Mary Beth. Their recently published gift book of the same title contains real-life stories of husbands and wives who have stood by each other through both prosperity and adversity.

Bradley James Skistimas is the voice and songwriter behind indie project *Five Times August*. Since 2004, *Five Times August's* music has been heard on over 80 TV shows, commercials, and movies. His wonderful composition, **Proud of You**, was written in 2019 for his son Austin's first day of kindergarten! Please check out the recording on Facebook of Brad singing to his children; it is priceless. The story behind this offering is that our amazing colleague and teacher, Dr. Alice Hammel, sent Brad's recording to Dr. V after we performed at the Kodály National Conference in Chicago over Spring Break! I shared it with the choir and said offhandedly to master's student Nick Gomez-Colon that we should have a choral arrangement of this piece. Four days later, we did! No matter the landmarks, as outlined in the opening of these notes and our short presentation, please know how proud the SOM faculty are of all these outstanding students!

## Biography

*2022 CVPA Outstanding Student Mentor and 2016 JMU Woman of Distinction*, Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, brings to JMU a rich and diverse career of international performance and teaching. As JMU Director of Choral Activities, Dr. van der Vat-Chromy directs *The Madison Singers*, the *JMU Chorale*, the *UCSA: University Chorus Soprano/Alto Ensemble*, and coordinates the *VMRC Generations Choir*, an intergenerational choral practicum here in Harrisonburg. A certified Kodály music educator, Dr. V. is a proud faculty member of Kodály Institutes at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, TX, and JMU. The 2012-2014 Interim Music Director for the Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir, currently Dr. V. is the JMU Vocal Arts Summer Camp director. An active adjudicator, clinician, and guest conductor, Dr. V.'s research interests include the kinesthetic connections in conducting pedagogy, the integration of Kodály pedagogy into collegiate choral performance, and the sociological impact of choral cultures on student learning and the experience of flow. Dubbed by the renowned choral ensemble The King's Singers 'our collective fairy-godmother,' Dr. van der Vat-Chromy is the recipient of the *2021-2022 Shirley Hanson Roberts ('56) and Richard D. Roberts Endowment for Faculty Excellence*, a university-wide endowed award for excellence in student engagement, collaborative learning, growth, and self-discovery.

# Personnel

## The Madison Singers

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director*  
Elizabeth Williams, *collaborative pianist*  
Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *conductor*  
Addison Walton, *graduate conductor*  
Erica Taylor, Ashley Seminario, *TMS Managers*

| <b>Soprano</b>     | <b>Alto</b>      | <b>Tenor</b>     | <b>Bass</b>           |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Abby Wilson        | Addison Walton   | Devonte Garcia   | Daniel Klein          |
| Annie Urmanski     | Ashley Seminario | Drew Dodson      | Darien Roby           |
| Christina Santiago | Erica Taylor     | Mac Creswick     | Elijah Keyes          |
| Gillian Saunders   | Eva Pierce       | Nick Gomez-Colon | Johnny Parker         |
| Josephine Suwanpoh | Mara McBane      | Ricky Goodwyn    | N. Myrogiannis-Koukos |
| Leah Brown         | Nicole Dudley    |                  | Roman Leonard         |
| Marlow Lewis       | Olive Poole      |                  |                       |
| Sophie Osmani      | Sophia Castro    |                  |                       |

## The JMU Chorale

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *director*  
Amy Robertson, *collaborative pianist*  
Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *conductor*  
Addison Walton, *graduate conductor*  
Ciara Theisz, Kelly Donlan, Natalie Carter, *Chorale Managers*

| <b>Soprano</b>     | <b>Alto</b>        | <b>Tenor</b>     | <b>Bass</b>           |
|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Anna Osborne       | Addison Walton     | Evelyn Larking   | Brian V.-Garmendia    |
| Christina Santiago | Chloe Sporysz      | Joshua Nieves    | Kevin Landry          |
| Emalee Stepp       | Ciara Theisz       | Kieran Morales   | Michael Tsougranis    |
| Emma Corrao        | Hannah Greer-Young | Nick Gomez-Colon | N. Myrogiannis-Koukos |
| Helen Albiston     | Isabella Cerullo   | Paolo Mancini    | Thayer Causer         |
| Katy Lange         | Izzy Layman        |                  |                       |
| Kelly Donlan       | Linda Blazer       |                  |                       |
| Kimberly Aikens    | Mara McBane        |                  |                       |
| Madison Murphy     | Nicole Dudley      |                  |                       |
| Natalie Carter     | Olive Poole        |                  |                       |
| Parker Bigley      | Rebecca Imbasciani |                  |                       |
| Sophia Loadholtz   | Sophia Castro      |                  |                       |

## **SP '24 JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY CHORAL AREA**

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy

*Director of Choral Activities*

*Professor of Choirs, Conducting, and Choral Music Education*

Dr. W. Bryce Hayes

*Associate Director of Choral Activities*

*Associate Professor of Choirs, Choral Music Education*

Dr. Nikos Myrogiannis-Koukos, *DMA Choral Conducting*

Addison Walton, *DMA Choral Conducting Graduate Student*

Ricky Goodwyn, *MM Choral Conducting Student*

Nick Gomez-Colon, *MM Choral Conducting Student*

Nicole Dudley, *Choral Librarian*

### **JMU CHORAL COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS**

Amy Robertson, *The JMU Chorale*

Linlin Uta, *UCTB*

Elizabeth Williams, *The Madison Singers, TCC, and UCSA*

### **UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE MANAGERS/CONDUCTING INTERNS**

Ashley Seminaro, Erica Taylor, *TMS*

Ciara Theisz, Kelly Donlan, Natalie Carter, *JMU Chorale*

Nick Gomez-Colon,, *Treble Chamber Choir*

Gillian Saunders, *UCSA*

Ricky Goodwyn, *UCTB*

### **JMU CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN CHORAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (ACDA)**

Nicole Dudley, *president*; Mara McBane, *vice-president*;

Helen Albiston, *secretary*; Drew Dodson, *treasurer*;

Sophie Osmani, *historian & public relations*

### **JMU VOICE AREA**

Dr. Sonya Baker, *soprano, Voice Area Coordinator*

Dr. Carrie Stevens, *mezzo-soprano*

Dr. Jamison Walker, *tenor, Interim Director of Opera*

Dr. Nicole Jenkins, *soprano*

Professor Kevin McMillan, *baritone*

Professor David Newman, *baritone*

Professor Brenda Witmer, *soprano*

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *Director of Choral Activities*

Dr. W. Bryce Hayes, *Associate Director of Choral Activities*