

From Root to Sky

Andrew Schmidt, Founder

Sydney Sewell, Director

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I. An Invocation

Myr, Zaraz (*Peace, Now*)

Joan Szymko

To a Wild Rose

Edward MacDowell
arr. Paul Ambrose

II. Our Lineage

The Ancient Ones

Jessica Shepherd, speaker

Joan Szymko

Lineage

Andrea Ramsey

Sing My Child

Sailor Stevens & Laura Youngblood, duet

Sarah Quartel

III. A Cycle of Faith and Reconciliation

Psalm 23

Franz Schubert

Coronach

Das Leben

IV. Folk Songs of the Four Seasons

Ralph Vaughan Williams

Autumn

1. John Barleycorn
2. The Unquiet Grave
3. An Acre of Land

Winter

1. Children's Christmas Song
2. Wassail Song
3. In Bethlehem City
4. God Bless the Master

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Program Notes

We originally chose the songs in this program around themes of Heaven and Earth. They evoke a deep connection to the earth, to our roots and history, and to our shared humanity, while also expressing our universal longing for what lies beyond the merely physical—our memory of and longing for those who have gone before us, our dreams of peace and harmony in the world, and our need for the care of a loving deity.

Through these themes continually threads the role of music and song: it is a medium for expressing every human emotion; it is an aspect of culture and human connection, something shared and passed down, like the wisdom of our ancestors; and it is the least physically permanent of all the arts, one that can only exist in the space of silence and time passing: music itself draws into the physical world some sense of the eternal and timeless.

We open with Joan Szymko's *Myr Zaraz*, which repeats: "Peace, NOW"—a desperate cry for peace in a divided, conflicted and broken world. This song does not merely dream of a future of kindness, peace, and unity—it demands that we begin *now* in the effort to build it. Next Edward McDowell's *To a Wild Rose* connects the ethereal art of music with the physicality of the land. Although we sing in praise of the wild rose, our human hopes, dreams and sorrows are also embedded in the land: "Land! All thy hopes, all thy woes, rang from me in songs."

In our next set, Joan Szymko's *The Ancient Ones*, demands in the voice of our ancestors that we remember our roots, for, as they say "You are us"—to forget the past is to forget ourselves, and to leave our own children unmoored in the future. Andrea Ramsey's *Lineage* expands on this theme, calling up the memory of all the grandmothers who labored before us, and the wisdom they passed on. They seem as giants to our eyes: we find ourselves asking, "Why am I not as they?" Then, in Sarah Quartel's *Sing, My Child* the wisdom of the mothers and grandmothers meets the blossoming of new life in childhood.

Our next set consists of several pieces by Schubert that pull our thoughts into the realm of eternity. *Psalm 23* looks to the heavens for protection and care, trusting in a Power that surpasses human understanding. *Coronach* is a funeral lament that invokes the falling autumn leaves and fading flowers as an expression of grief for one who is lost, while *Das Leben* takes death more lightly and hopes for a happier place beyond the grave: the 'harvest-time of immortality.'

The rest of our program is taken from Vaughan Williams' *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*. The **Autumn** songs remind us of our roots in the earth: *John Barleycorn*, a rather unique drinking song, personifies the cultivation and harvest of the grain used for beer. *The Unquiet Grave* is a girl's haunting dirge in which she begs for one last kiss from her dead lover's ghost, and longs for death herself. In *An Acre of Land* a person's inheritance involves a plot so small that he claims to be able to cultivate it with impossibly small tools. Finally, **Winter** songs celebrate the Christmas holiday: *In Bethlehem City* recounts the Christmas story, in which the divine Child descends from heaven to live on earth among the poor and lowly. In the *Children's Christmas Song*, *Wassail Song*, and *God Bless the Master*, carolers praise the hospitality of the houses they visit and wish blessings and abundance on the owners there.

We, too, thank you for your presence and generosity in supporting us and being here this evening, and hope that the music we bring to you will uplift your spirits and lighten your hearts. In uncertain and difficult times, we remember our ancestors and our grandmothers, their wisdom and memory and strength. Often their sage advice turns to song: "when troubles come and worry is all that can be found, gather your strength . . . sing, my child." May your holidays and new year, as they arrive, also be filled with abundance and blessings!

– Anne Beck, member / social media & outreach coordinator

Texts and Translations

An Invocation

Myr, Zaraz

Joan Szymko

Peace, Now

To a Wild Rose

Hermann Hagerdorn

Come, oh song! Com, oh Dreams!
Soft eh gates of day close,
Sleep my birds! Sleep, streams!
Sleep my wild rose!

Pool and bud, hill and deep,
You who wore my robes, sleep!
Droop, East! Die, West!
Let my land rest.

Woods I woke your boughs!
Hills I woke your elf throngs!
Land! All thy hopes and woes
Rang from me in songs.

Come, oh songs! Come, oh dreams!
In our house is deep rest,
Through the pines gleams, gleams
Bright the gold west.

There the flutes shall cry,
There the viols weep.
Laugh, my dreams, and sigh!
Sing, and vigil keep,
Call them to sleep.

Our Lineage

The Ancient Ones

Patricia Reis

From the beginning,
We have been with you.
We are the ancient ones
And we remember.

We remember the time when there was only Love,
The time when all breathing was one.
We remember the seed of your being

Planted in the belly of the vast, black night.
We remember the red cave of deep slumber.

The time of forgetting,
The sound of your breath,
The pulse of your heart.
We remember the force
Of your longing for life,
The cries of your birth
Bringing you forth.

We are the Ancient Ones
And we have waited
And watched.

You say that you cannot remember that time
That you have no memory of us.
You say that you can not hear our voices
That our touch no longer moves you.
You say there can be no return
That something has been lost,
That there is only silence.

We say the time of waiting is over.
We say the silence has been broken.
We say there can be no forgetting now.
We say listen.
We are the bones of your grandmother's grandmothers.
We have returned now.
We say you cannot forget us now
We say we are with you and you are us.
Remember Remember.

Lineage

Margaret Walker

My grandmothers were strong.
They followed plows and bet to toil.
They moved through fields sowing seed.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers were strong.
They touched the earth and grain grew.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers were strong.
They were full of sturdiness and singing.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers were strong.
My grandmothers were full of memories.
Smelling of soap and onions, and wet clay.

With veins rolling roughly over quick hands
They have many clean words to say.
My grandmothers were strong.

My grandmothers were strong.
Why am I not as they?

Sing, My Child

Sarah Quartel

Sing for the promise in each new morning.
Sing for the hope in a new day dawning.
All around is beauty bright!
Wake in the morning and sing, my child.

Dance in the joy of the day unfolding.
Dance as you work and dance as you're learning.
All around is beauty bright!
Take in the day and dance, my child.

But when troubles come and worry is all that can be found,
Gather your strength and hear your voice.
Sing, my child.

Laugh in the cool and the fresh of the ev'ning.
Laugh in your triumph, laugh in succeeding.
All around is beauty bright!
Rest in the ev'ning and laugh, my child.

Peace in the stillness and dark of the night.
Peace in the dreams of your silent delights.
All around is beauty bright!
Sleep in the night and peace, my child.

A Cycle of Faith and Reconciliation

Der 23 Psalm

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd: therefore, can I lack nothing.
He shall feed me in a green pasture: and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.
He shall convert my soul : and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness, for his Name's sake.
Yea, thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff comfort me.
Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me : thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full.
But thy loving-kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Coronach

He is separated from us from the mountain and the forest
Like a spring dried up when we were in need.
The spring will flow, fed by the rain,
We will never see joy again, Duncan will never see tomorrow.

The reaper's hand takes ripe ears of corn,
Our dirge laments blooming youth.
The autumn wind drives leaves, the yellow ones, the wilted ones,
Our flower bloomed when mildew wilted them.
You fleeting feet, you counsel in distress,
You poor in battle, how deep is your slumber.
Like dew on the mountains, like foam on the stream,
Like bubbles on the waves, you are forever separated

Das Leben

J.C. Wannovius

Life is a dream,
It is hardly noticed, it is barely felt;
For as quickly as clouds pass by
This dream is over.

Anyone who has had a good dream is happy,
Anyone is happy who plants seeds here
That will be harvested at the time
Of immortality.

Life is a glimpse
Into the happiness of the future
That anyone can have
Who has done good things here.

Happy is he who, after the night
Of the grave, wakes up cheerfully,
Who is not terrified by the voice
That wakes him out of sleep.

Anyone who, as the work comes to an end,
Has to fear the reckoning
Truly has no glimpse
Into the happiness of the future.

Folks Songs of the Four Seasons

English Folksongs

III. Autumn

John Barleycorn

There came three men from out the West,
Their victory to try,
And they have taken a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

They took a plough and ploughed him in,
Laid clods upon his head:
And they have taken a solemn oath

John Barleycorn is dead.
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

So then he lay for three long weeks
Till the dew from heaven did fall:
John Barleycorn sprang up again
And that surprised them all.
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

There he remained till midsummer,
And looked both pale and wan,
For all he had a spiky beard
To shew he was a man.
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

But soon came men with their sharp scythes
And chopped him to the knee,
They rolled and tied him by the waist
And served him barbarously
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

We'll tip white wine into a glass
And scarlet into a can,
John Barleycorn and his brown bowl
Shall prove the better man.
Sing right fol lol the diddle al the dee,
Right fol leero dee.

The Unquiet Grave

Cold blows the wind to my true love,
And a few small drops of rain:
I never had but one true love
And in greenwood he was slain.

I'll do as much for my true love
As any young girl may,
I'll sit and weep down by his grave
For twelve months and a day.

But when twelve months were come and gone
This young man he arose,
What makes you weep down by my grave?
I can't take my repose.

One kiss, one kiss of your lily white lips,
One kiss is all I crave,
One kiss of your lily white lips,

And return back to your grave.

My lips they are as cold as clay,
My breath is earthy and strong,
If you were to kiss my lily white lips,
Your days would not be long.

My time belong, my time be short,
Tomorrow or today
Sweet Christ in Heaven have all my soul
And take my life away.

An Acre of Land

My father left me an acre of land, (Ivy sing Ivery)
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

I ploughed it with a ram's horn (Ivy sing Ivery)
I sowed it with a thimble,
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

I harrowed it with a bramble bush, (Ivy sing Ivery)
I reaped it with a penknife
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

I sent it home in a walnut shell (Ivy sing Ivery)
I threshed it with my needle and thread
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

I winnowed it with a handkerchief (Ivy sing Ivery)
I sent it to mill with a team of great rats
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

The carter brought a curly whip, (Ivy sing Ivery)
The whip did pop and the wagon did stop.
And a bunch of green holly and Ivery

IV. Winter

Children's Christmas Song

We've been a while awandering
Amongst the leaves so green,
But now we come awassailing
So plainly to be seen.
For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

We are not daily beggars,
That beg from door to door;
We are your neighbours' children,
Whom you have seen before.

For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

Good Master and good Mistress,
While you're sitting by the fire,
Pray think of us poor children
That wander in the mire.
For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

We've got a little purse
Made of leathern ratchin skin
We want a little of your money
To line it well within.
For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

Bring us out a table,
And spread it with a cloth,
Bring us out a mouldy cheese
And some of your Christmas loaf.
For it's Christmas time, when we travel far and near;
May God bless you and send you a happy new year.

Wassail Song

Wassail, Wassail all over the town,
Our bread it is white and our ale it is brown,
Our bowl it is made of the white Maple tree;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the horse and to his right eye.
Pray God send our Master a good Christmas pie,
A good Christmas pie as ever I did see.
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the ox ad to his broad horn.
Pray God send our Master a good crop of corn.
A good crop of corn as ever I did see;
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Here's a health to the cow and to her long tail.
Pray God send our Master a good cask of Ale;
A good cask of Ale as ever I did see
In the Wassail bowl we'll drink unto thee.

Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best,
They I pray your sould in heaven may rest,
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,
May the devil take butler, bowl and all!

The here's to the maid in the lily white smock,

Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock,
Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin,
For to let these jolly Wassailers walk in!

In Bethlehem City

In Bethlehem City in Judea it was
That Joseph and Mary together did pass,
All for to be taxed when thither they came,
For Ceasar Augustus commanded the same.

Refrain: The let us be merry, cast sorrow aside,
Our Savior Christ Jesus was born on this tide.

But Mary's full time being come as we find,
She brought forth her first born to save all man kind;
The inn being full, for the heavenly guest
No place could she find to lay Him to rest. **Refrain**

Then they were constrained in a stable to lie,
Where horses and asses they used for to tie.
Their lodging so simple they took in no scorn,
Our Saviour was born. **Refrain**

Then God sent an angel from Heaven so high,
To certain poor shepherds in fields where they lie,
And bade them no longer in sorrow to stay
Because that our Saviour was born on this day. **Refrain**

Then presently after the shepherds did spy,
Vast numbers of angels did stand in the sky;
So merry were talking, so sweetly did sing,
All glory and praise to our heavenly King. **Refrain**

God Bless the Master

God bless the Master of this house
With happiness beside;
Wherever his body rides or walks,
Lord Jesus be his guide.

God bless the Mistress of this house
With gold chain round her breast,
Wherever her body sleeps or wakes,
Lord send her soul to rest.

God bless your house, your children too,
Your cattle and your store,
The Lord increase you day by day
And send you more and more!