

# She Is

*Andrew Schmidt, Director   Emma Newton, Cello   Matthew Alan Edwards, Piano*

*St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church*

*Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 7:30pm*

## **She Begins and Ends**

From Rivers

*Amanda Jones, soloist*

Caroline Shaw

Manx Lullaby

arr. Lori-Anne Dolloff

The Seal Lullaby

Eric Whitacre

## **She is Mother and Child**

Ave Maris Stella

*Sydney Sewell, Conductor*

Eva Ugalde

Vere Languorous

*Sue Lawton, Ann Vines, Leah Piper, Trio*

Antonio Lotti  
arr. Johannes Brahms

Duo Seraphim

*Jessica Shepherd, Ann Vines, Jamie Hillyer, Trio*

Caterina Assandra  
arr. Emily Jenkins

## **She is Sacred**

In Thy Kingdom

Aleksander Kastalsky

It Is Truly Meet

Aleksander Kastalsky

The Pre-eternal Council

*Jamie Hiller, solo*

Pavel Chesnokov

## **She is Strength**

She

*Sydney Sewell, Amanda Jones, solos*

arr. Andrea Ramsey

Orion

Susan LaBarr

## Program Notes

Tonight's program began with an effort to find pieces that were specifically written or arranged for treble voices. When the program came together, we discovered that our songs all fit rather broadly under the concept of "**SHE IS**" — the woman — her own identity and the many roles she plays, in her own story and the stories of those around her. This theme seems appropriate for our choir, where each of our members brings to the community her own unique identity as a woman, and her own artistry as a singer, while all of us collectively attempt to express something of a universal experience. What results is a program that is not just about women, but about the whole world: from our interconnectedness with the natural world and our dependence on the element of water, to the universal experiences of birth, suffering and death, to our reverence for the beautiful and the sacred — these are themes that encompass the whole of the human experience, and we look forward to sharing them with you.

The first part of our program is titled **SHE BEGINS AND ENDS**, referencing the woman's essential participation in the continuation of the life cycle. We open with Caroline Shaw's *From Rivers*, a piece imagined around the movements of water through the cyclical process of evaporation and precipitation. The canon structure of this song expresses the unending cycle of life and our participation in it, through the cycle of water, the most essential element for life. Next we consider the beginnings of life with two lullabies: *Manx Lullaby* is a folk song that employs the imagery of birds, Gaelic symbols of folklore and cultural identity. Next, Eric Whitacre's exquisite setting of Rudyard Kipling's poem *The Seal Lullaby* captures the slow rocking rhythm of the waves at sea and a mother soothing her child to sleep.

These songs lead into our next theme: **SHE IS A MOTHER AND CHILD**, focusing on the timeless artistic motif of the Madonna and Child. Eva Ugalde's unique modern setting of the ancient text *Ave Maris Stella* invokes the Madonna as the "Star of the Sea" beginning with a simple chant, then exploring various rhythmic and tonal dimensions before its peaceful resolution. Next, Brahms' arrangement of Antonio Lotti's *Vere Languores* brings to mind the harsher realities of human suffering, through the one who has "borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." This score was constructed from Brahms' part books by our own director, Andrew Schmidt. We wrap up this set with Catarina Assandra's ethereal setting of *Duo Seraphim*, which imagines the seraphim calling back and forth in echoed song.

This attitude of reverence and admiration segues into our next set, **SHE IS SACRED**, which contains a trio of pieces in Church Slavonic. Katalisky's *In Thy Kingdom* contemplates thoughts arising in the face of approaching death, along with hopefulness about the beginning of new life to come. *It is Truly Fitting* honors the beauty and sacredness of the "Theotokos," the "God-bearer" Virgin Mother, while Chesnokov's *The Pre-Eternal Council* praises her role as one planned from before eternity, placing her in touch with the beginning of all existence and the eternal divine cycle that encompasses it.

After being lifted to these heights, our last set, **SHE IS STRENGTH**, brings us gently back to earth and explores more contemporary styles. Andrea Ramsey's arrangement of *She* brings to mind the apparently endless struggles and hopes of ordinary existence, but we are reminded of the perseverance and determination that carries her through, because in the words of the song, "she don't stop." Finally in Susan Labarr's *Orion*, our gaze is upon the stars, particularly the constellation Orion, which rises in autumn and signals the approach of winter, cold and hardship. Nevertheless, there is a protectiveness in this image, the one who stands guard in tough times and "tells us of our worth" — through the endurance of suffering and the barren periods of life, we discover our real potential. Ultimately, this is where most of us find ourselves, struggling with the mundane demands of ordinary existence, carrying on with determination and hope, and trying to discover our own true worth.

We hope you enjoy tonight's concert and find that our journey through song lets you feel a renewed connection to the source of Life we all participate in. As always, we thank you for your support; we could not do this without you! — *Anne Beck, Member*

# *Texts and Translations*

## **She Begins and Ends**

### **From Rivers**

Caroline Shaw

To the sky from rivers.

We are beginning will be again. We are beginning round and around. Around.  
We are beginning will be again. We come together around you.  
You are beginning will be again. We come together. Around.

My feet in the river, my face to the sky.

### **Manx Lullaby**

arr. Lori-Anne Dolloff

Oh hush thee my dove  
Oh hush thee my rowan  
Oh hush thee my lapwing my little brown bird

Oh fold thy wings and seek thy nest now,  
Oh shine the berry on the bright tree.  
The bird is home from the mountain and valley  
Oh horo hiriri Cadul gu lo.

--Manx Folk Song

### **The Seal Lullaby**

Eric Whitacre

Oh! Hush thee, my baby, the night is behind us  
And black are the waters that sparkled so green  
The moon, o'er the combers, looks downward to find us  
At rest in the hollows that rustle between

Where billow meets billow, then soft be thy pillow  
Oh weary wee flipperling, curl at thy ease  
The storm shall not wake thee, nor shark overtake thee  
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!  
Asleep in the arms of the slow swinging seas!

-- Rudyard Kipling

## **She is Mother and Child**

### **Ave Maris Stella**

Eva Ugalde

HAIL, O Star of the ocean,  
God's own Mother blest,  
ever sinless Virgin,  
gate of heav'nly rest.

Taking that sweet Ave,  
which from Gabriel came,  
peace confirm within us,  
changing Eve's name.

Break the sinners' fetters,  
make our blindness day,  
Chase all evils from us,  
for all blessings pray.

Show thyself a Mother,  
may the Word divine  
born for us thine Infant  
hear our prayers through thine.

Virgin all excelling,  
mildest of the mild,  
free from guilt preserve us  
meek and undefiled.

Keep our life all spotless,  
make our way secure  
till we find in Jesus,  
joy for evermore.

Praise to God the Father,  
honor to the Son,  
in the Holy Spirit,  
be the glory one. Amen.

### **Vere Languorous**

Antonio Lotti  
arr. Johannes Brahms

Truly he himself bore our griefs,  
and he himself carried our sorrows.

## **Duo Seraphim**

Caterina Assandra  
arr. Emily Jenkins

Two seraphim cried to one another:  
Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth.  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

There are three who bear witness in heaven:  
the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit:  
and these three are one.  
Holy is the Lord God of Sabaoth.  
The whole earth is full of his glory.

## **She is Sacred**

### **In Thy Kingdom**

Aleksander Kastalsky

In thy kingdom remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, pure in heart, you whom men revile you... Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.

### **It Is Truly Meet**

Aleksander Kastalsky

It is truly fitting to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure and the mother of God. More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without corruption thou gavest birth to God the word: true Theotokos, we magnify thee.

### **The Pre-eternal Council**

Pavel Chesnokov

Gabriel stood before thee, O Maiden,  
Revealing the pre-eternal counsel,  
Saluting thee and exclaiming:  
"Rejoice, O earth unsown!  
Rejoice, O bush unburnt!  
Rejoice, O depth hard to fathom!  
Rejoice, O bridge leading to the heavens  
and lofty ladder, which Jacob beheld!  
Rejoice, O divine jar of Manna!  
Rejoice, annulment of the curse!  
Rejoice, restoration of Adam:  
the Lord is with thee!

## **She is Strength**

**She**

arr. Andrea Ramsey

She walked towards you with her head down low,  
She wondered if there's a way out of the blue.  
Who's gonna take her home this time?  
She knew that this time wouldn't be the last time.

There she waits looking for a savior,  
Someone to save her from her dying self,  
Always taking ten steps back and one step forward,  
She's tired, but she don't stop.

Every day she stood, hoping for a new life,  
She closed her eyes and she heard a small voice say,  
You don't stop, no, you belong to me.  
She cried, maybe it's too late.

She walked towards you with her head down low,  
She wondered if there's a way out of the blue.  
Who's gonna take her home this time?  
She knew that this time wouldn't be the last time.

--Word and Music by Laura Mvula and Steve Brown

**Orion**

Susan LaBarr

Most mourn the falling leaves,  
The weight of death the ground receives.  
Yet you rise in Winter's Chill,  
And in the gloom you still believe.

Most mourn the setting sun.  
The aging day is overcome.  
Yet you rise in Twilight Still,  
And night reveals you one by one.

Carefully the constellations  
Bend their knees to your dictation.  
Standing guard with quiver ready,  
Stance you've held for centuries steady.  
Warrior high above the earth,  
Telling human beings of their worth.

Most mourn the sinking mast,  
The ocean's pull into the vast.  
Yet you rise at Memory's Will,  
And you will stand on ages past.

--Faith Zimmer