



*This program is made possible
through the generous support of
the Jerome Foundation.*



VOCALLESSENCE ReMix Singer Studio

Tuesday, March 6, 2018 at 7:00 PM
Landmark Center
75 W 5th St
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Monday, March 19, 2018 at 7:00 PM
Icehouse
2528 Nicollet Ave
Minneapolis, MN 55404

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers
Nation
Philip Brunelle, *conductor*

Isaac C. Lovdahl, *composer*
Zack Pentecost, *composer*
Shruthi Rajasekar, *composer*
Daniel Sabzghabaei, *composer*

Carol Barnett, *composer-mentor*
Libby Larsen, *composer-mentor*
J. David Moore, *composer-mentor*
Timothy C. Takach, *composer-mentor*

Sam Bergman, *viola*
Penelope Freeh, *dancer*
Jocelyn Hagen, *piano*
Cicely Parnas, *cello*

Please take a moment to check that cell phones, paging devices and wristwatch alarms are turned off before the reading session begins. Recording devices and cameras are prohibited. Thank you.

THE PROGRAM

Nation

Lovestain

Penelope Freeh, *dancer*

José González
(2003)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Sol

World Premiere

Isaac Lovdahl
(2018)

Tesla's Reflections of Light

Samantha Noonan, *soprano*
World Premiere

Zack Pentecost
(2018)

Soneto 17

World Premiere

Shruthi Rajasekar
(2018)

Zemestun

Mari Scott, *soprano*; Anna Mooy, *alto*
World Premiere

Daniel Sabzghabaei
(2018)

Elastic Heart

Furler, Pentz, Swanson, Tesfaye, arr. Timothy C. Takach
Timothy C. Takach, *cajon*
(2013)

INTERMISSION

Etudes for Cicely

Cicely Parnas, *cello*

Jocelyn Hagen
(2018)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Fragile

Timothy C. Takach, *hand drum*

Timothy C. Takach
(2015)

Women of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Forgotten

Sam Bergman, *viola*; Penelope Freeh, *dancer*; Jocelyn Hagen, *piano*

Jocelyn Hagen
(2011)

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Goodbye, Then

Sam Bergman, *viola*; Jocelyn Hagen, *piano*

Timothy C. Takach
(2014)

Agnus Dei from *amass*

Jocelyn Hagen, *piano*; Cicely Parnas, *cello*

Jocelyn Hagen
(2011)

Men of the VocalEssence Ensemble Singers

Go

Timothy C. Takach
(2012)

Nation

Selections to be announced from the stage

VocalEssence Ensemble Singers and Nation

Hands

Kristina Rodel Sorum, *alto*; Erik Krohg, *bass*

Jocelyn Hagen
(2017)

VOCAL ESSENCE ReMix

VocalEssence ReMix encourages break-out musical artists—whether you sing in a rock band or play classical music—to write for voice.

Four talented, emerging composers/songwriters are selected annually to have a six-month one-on-one composer mentorship with renowned composers Libby Larsen, Carol Barnett, J. David Moore or Timothy C. Takach as they each write two choral works, one of which is suitable for high school-level choirs. The program also includes a performance by the professional VocalEssence Ensemble Singers, and possible commission and publication through VocalEssence Music Press.

VocalEssence ReMix is a collaboration between VocalEssence, the American Composers Forum, the American Choral Directors Association of Minnesota, and the Jerome Foundation.

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

LOVESTAIN

José González

You left a lovestain on my heart
And you left a bloodstain on the ground
But blood comes off easily

But blood comes off easily

You left a lovestain on my heart
And you left a bloodstain on the ground
But blood comes off easily

But blood comes off easily

SOL

Isaac Lovdahl

In the river
I found a little part of me
In the river
my face reflects
In the river my shadow appears
In the river my shadow is black
and looks bigger than me.

– Jonathan García de Alba

You may think
I am a shadow,
But inside I am a sun.

– Damia Gates

TESLA'S REFLECTIONS OF LIGHT

Zack Pentecost

When we look at the world around us, we are impressed with its beauty and grandeur. Each thing we perceive, though it may be vanishingly small, is in itself a world, that is, like the whole of the universe, matter and force governed by law, a world, the contemplation of which fills us with feelings of wonder and irresistibly urges us to ceaseless thought and inquiry.

Like a wave in the physical world, in the infinite ocean of the medium which pervades all, so in the world, in life, an impulse started proceeds onward, at times, may be, with the speed of light, at times, again, so slowly that for ages and ages it seems to stay, passing through processes of a complexity inconceivable to men; but in all its forms, in all its stages, its energy, ever and ever integrally present.

When two conducting bodies are insulated and electrified, we say that an electrostatic force is acting between them. This force manifests itself in attractions, repulsions, and stresses in the bodies. So great may be the strain exerted in the air that it may break down, and we observe sparks of light.

A single ray of light from a distant star may have altered the course of life, may have changed the destiny of nations, may have transformed the surface of the globe, so intricate, so inconceivably complex are the processes in Nature.

The last feeble manifestations of life, the last quiverings of matter about to die. But human eyes shall not witness such death. There is no death of matter, for throughout the infinite universe, all has to move, to vibrate, that is, to live.

– Nikola Tesla, extracted from “On Light and Other High Frequency Phenomena”

SONETO 17

Shruthi Rajasekar
(Sung in Spanish)

I do not love you as though you were salt-rose,
topaz, or carnation arrows that spread fire:
I love you as certain dark things are loved,
secretly, between the shadow and soul.

I love you like the plant that does not bloom and carries
within, hidden, the light of those flowers,
and thanks to your love, dark within my body lives
the dense fragrance that arose from the earth

I love you without knowing how, or why, or wherefrom,
I love you straightforwardly without trouble or concern,
I love you this way because I don't know how else to love

Except like this, in which neither am I nor are you
so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,
so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.

– Pablo Neruda, translated by Nina Narayanan

ZEMESTUN

Daniel Sabzghabaei
(Sung in Farsi)

Ball, ball, snowball, it snows
It is cold, it is winter
The boundless cold, makes our bodies tremble
When it snows,
The trees become white
Playing in the lanes give us happiness and clearness
In winter, the heater is always turned on
We should wear warm cloths, it is the time to catch cold.

*– traditional Persian winter poem,
translated by Dr. Fatimah Baji*

ELASTIC HEART

arr. Timothy C. Takach

And another one bites the dust;
But why can I not conquer love?
And I might've thought that we were one,
Why not fight this war without weapons?
And I want it and I wanted it bad,
but there were so many red flags.
Now another one bites the dust.
And let's be clear, I trust no one.

You did not break me.
I'm still fighting for peace.

I've got thick skin and an elastic heart,
but your blade, it might be too sharp.
I'm like a rubber band, until you pull too hard,
but I may snap when I move close
but you won't see me fall apart,
'cause I've got an elastic heart.
I've got an elastic heart.
Yeah, I've got an elastic heart.

And I will stay up through the night.
Let's be clear, won't close my eyes.
And I know that I can survive;
I walked through fire to save my life.
And I want it, I want my life so bad;
and I'm doing everything I can.
Then another one bites the dust.
It's hard to lose a chosen one.

You did not break me.
I'm still fighting for peace.

I've got thick skin and an elastic heart,
but your blade, it might be too sharp.
I'm like a rubber band, until you pull too hard,
but I may snap when I move close
but you won't see me fall apart,
'cause I've got an elastic heart.
*– Sia Furler, Thomas Pentz, Abel Tesfaye
and Andrew Swanson*

FRAGILE

Timothy C. Takach

You now know that anything could happen;
things that never happened before,
things that only happened
in movies and nightmares
are happening now,
as if nothing could stop them.

You know now that you are not safe,
you know you live in fragile skin and bones,
that even steel and concrete can melt away,
and that the earth itself can come unhinged,
shaken from its orbit around the sun.

You know, now that anything can happen,
it's hard to know what will,
and what will you do
now that you know?
What words will you say
now that you could say anything?
What hands will you hold?
Whose heart will beat inside you?
– Joyce Sutphen, used with permission

FORGOTTEN

Jocelyn Hagen

Let it be forgotten, as a flower is forgotten,
Forgotten as a fire that once was singing gold.
Let it be forgotten forever and ever -
Time is a kind friend, he will make us old.

If anyone asks, say it was forgotten
Long and long ago -
As a flower, as a fire, as a hushed footfall
In a long forgotten snow.
– Sara Teasdale

GOODBYE, THEN

Timothy C. Takach

We said goodbye then
With people there
So it wouldn't be quite so hard.
And we had said what we wanted to say
Or at least we knew by then
What didn't need to be said,
So it wasn't so hard.

We would see each other again
Though we didn't know when
And we could call and talk
Across the thousands of miles between us.
After all we had known each other
All this time
And would know each other
always and anywhere.
So it wasn't hard.

But – both of us – our eyes were tears
 And the world and the people were not there,
 And that last hug –
 How could I not hold you?
 How could we separate our hearts
 When we felt them beating together?
 And how – God, how – could I let go?
 – *Doug Wilhide*

AGNUS DEI

Jocelyn Hagen

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 miserere nobis.
 Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi,
 dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 have mercy on us.
 Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
 grant us peace.

BIOGRAPHIES



AMERICAN
COMPOSERS
FORUM

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for

their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, the Forum provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, the Forum fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, musicians, and music patrons. composersforum.org



Carol Barnett creates audacious and engaging music, both for traditional instrumentation and for cross-pollinations such as a Mass accompanied by a bluegrass band, or a duet for steel pan and organ. A force in the Minnesota music scene since 1970, her work has been funded by multiple regional and national organizations, and published

through major houses. Carol is a charter member of the American Composers Forum and a graduate of the University of Minnesota. www.carolbarnett.net



Violist **Sam Bergman** has been a member of the Minnesota Orchestra since 2000. He serves as host and head writer for the Orchestra's *Inside the Classics* concert series and also leads the *Symphonic Adventures* series aimed at high school students. Away from Minneapolis, he is Principal Violist of the California-based Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, plays regularly as a member of the IRIS Orchestra in Memphis, and teaches at the Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in New Hampshire.



Penelope Freeh is a McKnight Fellow for Choreographers, Dancers, and Sage awardee for Outstanding Performer. She has been collaborating with Jocelyn Hagen since 2011. Their chamber dance opera *Test Pilot* won a Sage for Best Overall Design and toured Minnesota in 2016. Penelope danced for James Sewell Ballet for seventeen years, serving as Artistic Associate from 2007–11. She choreographs widely and teaches at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul Conservatory, Zenon, and TU Dance. penelopefreeh.com



Jocelyn Hagen composes music that has been described as “simply magical” (Fanfare Magazine) and “dramatic and deeply moving” (Star Tribune, Minneapolis/St. Paul). Her first forays into composition were via songwriting, and this is very evident in her work. Her melodic music is rhythmically driven, texturally complex, and has recently become more experimental in nature. In 2013 she released an EP entitled MASHUP, in which she performs Debussy's “Doctor Gradus Ad Parnassum” while singing Ed Sheeran's “The A Team.”

www.jocelynhagen.com

JEROME FOUNDATION

The **Jerome Foundation**, created by artist and philanthropist Jerome Hill (1905-1972), promotes a dynamic culture through support for artists, collectives and/or ensembles across all disciplines in the early stages of their vocational artistic lives to create new work and for nonprofit arts organizations that offer programs, services and activities for such artists, collectives and/or ensembles. The Foundation makes grants to not-for-profit arts organizations and artists in Minnesota and New York City.

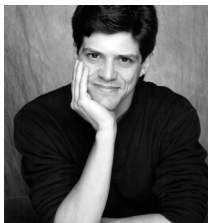
www.jeromefdn.org



Libby Larsen is one of America's most performed living composers. She has created a catalogue of over 400 works spanning virtually every genre from intimate vocal and chamber music to massive orchestral works and over twelve operas. Grammy Award winning and widely recorded, she is constantly sought after for commissions and premieres by major artists, ensembles, and orchestras around the world, and has established a permanent place for her works in the concert repertory. libbylarsen.com



Isaac C. Lovdahl graduated 'magna cum laude' from Concordia College in May 2015—receiving a B.M. in Vocal Music Education. Currently, he is employed as the choir director at Cretin-Derham Hall High School in St. Paul. He is also the Bass Section Leader/Soloist at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, and sings with the Twin Cities-based professional choir 'The Singers – Minnesota Choral Artists'. Isaac's music can be found through Santa Barbara Music Publishing, J.W. Pepper, and MusicSpoke.



J. David Moore is a composer, arranger, conductor, teacher, and Southerner who has lived in the Upper Midwest for most of his life. His music has been called "endlessly inventive," "glorious...haunting... breathtaking," and "joyous...wild and elemental." He publishes through his company Fresh Ayre Music. David lives in Minneapolis with his beautiful wife Anna, where he bakes bread, drinks tea, and is distracted by shiny objects. www.jdavidmoore.net

Nation is a collaborative vocal band pioneered by composer/performers Jocelyn Hagen and Timothy C. Takach. Their first EP "My Life Around You" was released in 2017 and includes 5 stunning pop a cappella cover songs. timothyctakach.com/nation



American cellist **Cicely Parnas**, praised for her "velvety sound, articulate passagework and keen imagination" (The New York Times), performs recitals, concertos, and chamber music across the globe. This summer she attended the Sitka International Cello Seminar as Artist Apprentice to Zuill Bailey, and in the 2017-2018 season she will appear as soloist with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Ms. Parnas will also record and premiere a series of commissioned works for solo cello. www.cicelyparnas.com



Zack Pentecost began his journey in music learning electric guitar in middle school. After completing a music theory course his senior year – in which his final composition project was read by the high school's concert band – Zack decided to pursue an undergraduate degree in music composition at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN. Zack continued his studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and completed his Ph.D. in Music Composition at the University of Minnesota. zackpentecost.com



Shruthi Rajasekar is a Minnesotan composer and vocalist. Shruthi was a 2016 winner of Vox Nova Chorale's Emerging Composers Competition and her work was featured on Classical MPR's Regional Spotlight. Shruthi studied voice with Jerry Elsbernd, Patricia Rozario, OBE, and Dr. Rochelle Ellis, and is also a disciple of Nirmala Rajasekar in Carnatic (South Indian classical) music. A graduate of Wayzata High School, Shruthi is currently a senior at Princeton University.



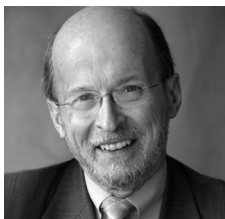
Daniel Sabzghabaei is a composer whose work aims to emphasize the malleability of time and how we experience it, not just in the concert hall but in everyday life. His work has been commissioned and presented by organizations including Hong Kong's *Intimacy of Creativity* festival, Dallas's *Voices of Change*, the *New York Festival of Song*, Seattle's *Esoterics*, and Korea's *Busan Choral Festival*. Daniel is currently a doctoral candidate and Sage Fellow at Cornell University. danielsabzghabaei.com



Reviewed as "gorgeous" (Washington Post) and "stunning" (Lawrence Journal-World), the music of **Timothy C. Takach** has risen fast in the concert world. His compositions have been performed on *A Prairie Home Companion*, The Boston Pops holiday tour, and at venues including the Library of Congress, Kennedy Center and Royal Opera House Muscat. He is a co-creator of the theatrical production of *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914*. Takach is a co-founder of the vocal ensemble Cantus and Graphite Publishing. www.timothyctakach.com

ABOUT VOCALESSENCE

VocalEssence, called “one of the irreplaceable music ensembles of our time” by Dana Gioia, past chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts—and the choral ensemble that Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones says “sings magnificently”—impacts thousands of students, singers, and composers each year through its initiative programs, contests, and support for innovative art. VocalEssence was founded in 1969 and has debuted more than 250 commissions and world premieres. For more information, visit vocalessence.org.



Philip Brunelle
*Artistic Director and Founder,
VocalEssence*

Philip Brunelle, artistic director and founder of VocalEssence, is an internationally-renowned conductor, choral scholar, and visionary. Philip has conducted symphonies, choral festivals, and operas on six continents. He recently completed 9 years as Vice President of IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music), holds five honorary degrees, and has been recognized for his commitment to choral music by the governments of Norway, Hungary, Sweden, Mexico, and the United Kingdom. His thoughts on music are at RenaissanceManpodcast.com. vocalessence.org/philipbrunelle



G. Phillip Shoultz, III
*Associate Conductor and Director of
Learning, Engagement, and
Community Programs*

Known for his innovative pedagogy and ability to inspire singers, **G. Phillip Shoultz, III**, serves as the Associate Conductor and Education Program Director of VocalEssence. Phillip completed doctoral studies at the University of Minnesota and also earned degrees from the University of Georgia and Georgia State University. His work in the public schools garnered multiple honors. Phillip won the 2015 ACDA Graduate Conducting Competition and represented ACDA in the 2017 International Conductors' Exchange program. www.vocalessence.org/gps/

MEMBERS OF THE VOCALESSENCE ENSEMBLE SINGERS



Minnesota is home to an international choral music gem—the **VocalEssence Ensemble Singers**. Declared by the Oxford Times (UK) as having “a blend that could—and should—be the envy of every choir in the business,” this 32-voice professional chorus is enjoyed by millions from Duluth, Minnesota to Shanghai, China. The VocalEssence Ensemble Singers are equally at ease premiering music by Pulitzer Prize winning composers as well as teen moms in our Lullaby Project. vocalessence.org/what-we-do/performing-ensembles/vocalessence-ensemble-singers

SOPRANO

Jennifer Bevington
Hannah Green
Samantha Noonan
Mari Scott

ALTO

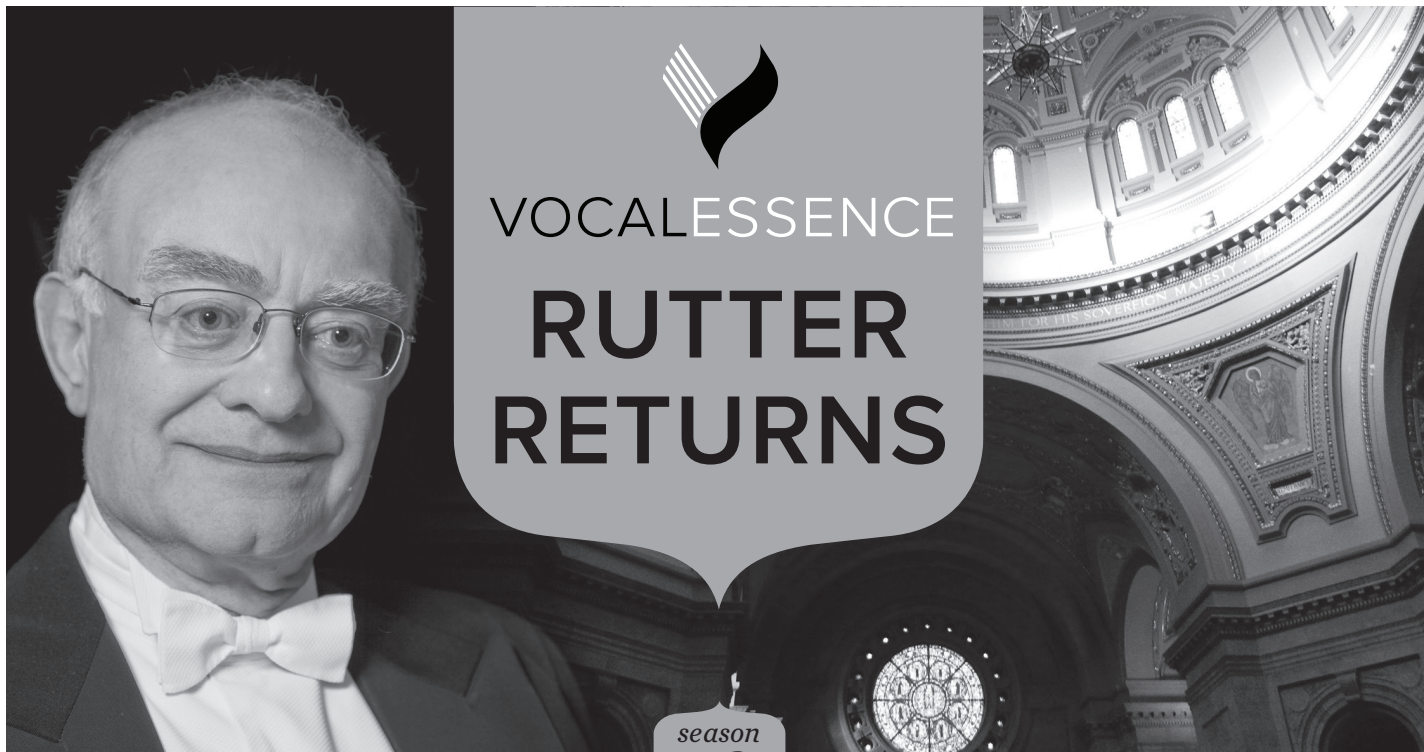
Marita J. Link
Anna Mooy
Sadie Nelson
Kristina Rodel Sorum

TENOR

Anders Eckman
Michael Fairbairn
Nicholas R. Mattsson
Kyle Schwartz

BASS

Joseph Ellickson
Erik Krohg
A.J. Lund
Nathan Petersen-Kindem



season
49
2017 - 2018

SAT, APR 21, 2018 AT 8 PM

Cathedral of Saint Paul

VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers
John Rutter, *guest conductor*

Concert Conversation with John Rutter at 7 PM.

On the eve of our golden anniversary, see VocalEssence shine as never before when we revisit some of our best-loved performances and hit new heights in the inspiring Cathedral of Saint Paul. The incomparable John Rutter returns to conduct *Feel the Spirit*, a cycle of his spiritual arrangements for chorus and chamber orchestra, as well as a new piece he penned to celebrate our upcoming 50th anniversary.

COMMUNITY SING WITH JOHN RUTTER

SUN, APR 22, 2018 AT 3 PM

Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis

TICKETS: vocalessence.org | 612-371-5656