

FORBES CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

School of Music

The Madison Singers & The JMU Chorale

presents

"Light of a Clear Blue Morning"

featuring

Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy, *conductor*

Amy Robertson, *collaborative piano*
Elizabeth Williams, *collaborative piano*
Johnny Park, *violin*

**Roman Leonard, Sophie Osmani, Emalee Stepp,
Ciara Theisz, Garrett Gass, *vocal soloists***

Sunday, May 4, 2025
2 pm
Concert Hall



Program

My Name is Lamiya:
Don't Call Me Refugee

M. Bussewitz-Quarm
(b. 1971)

Come Sweet Death
Komm, süßer Tod (BWV 478)

J. S. Bach (1685-1750)
Arr. London and Sandberg

Alleluia

Randall Thompson
(1899-1984)

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A Carnegie Hall Retrospective

Addison Walton, Tour Manager

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The Times, They Are A-Changin'

Bob Dylan (b. 1941)
Arr. Adam Podd

Garrett Gass, *tenor*

Light of A Clear Blue Morning

Dolly Parton (b. 1946)
Arr. C. H. Johnson

Johnny Park, *violin*

Roman Leonard, Sophie Osmani, Emalee Stepp, Ciara Theisz, *soloists*

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Shenandoah

American Folk Song
James Erb (1926-2014)

JMU Alma Mater #2

James R. Riley
(1899-1984)

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Program Notes

It has been a truly remarkable semester and year for the JMU Choral Area and the School of Music! As we gather for this final semester concert, it's a time to celebrate the culmination of a year filled with 'big choirs' and big projects. What an abundance of achievements to celebrate!

Michael Bussewitz-Quarm is a composer whose choral music engages with pressing social and environmental issues. Her work addresses topics ranging from coral reef conservation to gun violence and the global refugee crisis. An active advocate for the transgender community, she aims to foster understanding through compositional output, guest speaking engagements, and artistic collaboration. Composed in 2020 as part of the 'This is My Name' Series, **"My Name is Lamiya"** was written to bring attention to one of the most significant and challenging issues in our world today, the global refugee crisis. Nine-year-old Lamiya Safarova lost her home and village and began writing poems to express her feelings. The stirring text and repeated rhythmic elements persist throughout this work, along with body percussion that represents the journey of the refugee, forced away from their home, most often by foot.

Originally a song for solo voice and basso continuo from the 69 Sacred Songs and Arias that Johann Sebastian Bach contributed to *Musicalisches Gesang Buch* by Georg Christian Schemelli, this choral arrangement of one of Bach's most reflective and devotional songs, **Come, Sweet Death** (*Komm, süßer Tod*), is deeply moving. It has been suggested that this introspective piece reflects personal tragedies in Bach's life. Bach used lyrics by an unknown poet that expressed the wish for the relief of death and the fulfillment of heaven, asking death to come quickly and peacefully to deliver the singer to heaven. The aleatoric middle section, where each choir member sings their own prayer in their own way and time, may be seen as symbolic of how the Divine hears the all the prayers of humankind.

Come, sweet death, come, soothing rest. Come lead me homeward.

I am weary of life and longing. Come, I am waiting for thee.

Come now and set me free.

My eyes, at last, are gently closing now. Come, blessed rest.

With a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music and professional teaching ties to the Curtis Institute, the University of Virginia, and Harvard University, renowned American composer Randall Thompson was particularly heralded for his choral compositions. Counted as his most famous choral motet, **Alleluia** was commissioned by Serge Koussevitzky to open the Berkshire Music Center (now the Tanglewood Music Center). Although director Koussevitzky wanted a "fanfare" for voices, due to the war in Europe, Thompson felt that a jubilant Alleluia would be inappropriate and composed a quiet, introspective piece, in mostly soft dynamics with only a single fortissimo outburst near the end. The harmonies are simple throughout, although some subtle chromatic inflections give the work a special flavor. In Thompson's own words, "It is a slow, sad piece, and...comparable to the Book of Job, where it is written, 'The Lord gave, and

Program Notes - *continued*

the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” To this day, Thompson’s **Alleluia** is performed every summer at the opening of the Tanglewood Music Festival.

Composed in 1963 and released in 1965 on the album by the same title, Bob Dylan wrote “**The Times They Are A-Changin’**” as a deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change for the time. Heavily influenced by Irish and Scottish ballads, the *a-* in the song title is an archaic intensifying prefix, as in the British songs “A-Hunting We Will Go” and “Here We Come a-Wassailing” from the 18th and 19th centuries. Dylan recalled writing the song as a deliberate attempt to create an anthem of change for the moment. In 1985, he told American filmmaker and journalist Cameron Crowe, “This was definitely a song with a purpose. It was influenced, of course, by the Irish and Scottish ballads ... ‘Come All Ye Bold Highway Men’ and ‘Come All Ye Tender Hearted Maidens.’ I wanted to write a big song, with short concise verses that piled up on each other in a hypnotic way. The civil rights movement and the folk music movement were pretty close for a while and allied together at that time.” Since its release, **The Times They Are A-Changin’** has influenced people’s views on society, with critics noting the universal lyrics as contributing to the song’s lasting message of change. According to Dylan’s official website, between 1963 and 2009, he performed the song 633 times, which makes it his 23rd most-performed song as of June 2023. The song has been covered by dozens of artists, including, among others, Nina Simone and Josephine Baker; the Byrds, the Seekers, Peter, Paul, and Mary; Tracy Chapman; and Simon & Garfunkel. Ranked 59 on *Rolling Stone’s* 2004 list of the “500 Greatest Songs of All Time,” this reimagined interpretation of the classic Bob Dylan song is perfect for choirs. The reharmonization and contrasting musical style bring new attention and poignancy to these well-known lyrics.

 Come gather ‘round people wherever you roam,
 And admit that the waters round you have grown.
And accept it that soon you’ll be drenched to the bone.
 If your time to you is worth savin’,
and you better start swimmin’ or you’ll sink like a stone,
 for the times, they are a-changin’.

 Come mothers and fathers throughout the land,
 and don’t criticize what you can’t understand.
Your sons and your daughters are beyond your command.
 Your old road is rapidly aging.
Please get out of the new one if you can’t lend your hand.
 For the times they are a-changin’.

 The line it is drawn, the curse it is cast.
 The slow one now will later be fast.
 As the present now will later be past.
 the order is rapidly fading.
And the first one now will later be last.
 For the times they are a-changin’.

Program Notes - *continued*

Craig Hella Johnson's a cappella setting of Dolly Parton's **Light of a Clear Blue Morning** is infused with light and hopefulness. It opens with a solo violin and vocals, gradually building to a joyful overflowing of solos and vocal textures. The piece then gently relaxes into a reflective conclusion, offering a sense of peace and closure. Originally written in 1977 by Dolly Parton in response to struggles surrounding her split from a long-time musical and business partner, **Light of a Clear Blue Morning** has become a popular culture anthem for hope, perseverance, and tenacity.

It's been a long, dark night, and I've been waiting for the morning.
It's been a long, hard fight, but I see a brand-new day a-dawning.
I've been looking for the sunshine 'cause I ain't seen it in so long.
Everything's gonna work out fine.
Everything's gonna be alright, it's gonna be okay.
I can see the light of a clear blue morning.
I can see the light of a brand-new day.
I can see the light of a clear blue morning.
Everything's gonna be alright, it's gonna be okay.

The gorgeous James Erb arrangement of the classic **Shenandoah** was our concert opener at Carnegie Hall!

James Madison University Alma Mater No. 2

Dr. James R. Riley

Madison, James Madison, we'll be forever true.
Our loyalty will always be to JMU.
While friends remain within our hearts and knowledge guides our way.
James Madison will lead us on to conquer each new day!

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The Combined Madison Singers and JMU Chorale

Elizabeth Williams, *TMS Collaborative Pianist*
Amy Robertson, *JMU Chorale Collaborative Pianist*
+ *denotes graduate student*

Soprano

Abbey Spencer	Emma Jones	Kimberly Aikens
Abby Wilson	Helen Albiston	Marlow Lewis
Allie Ranton	Isabel Layman	Megan Wong
Anna Osborne	Isabella Cerullo	Nancy Walker
Augusta Nafziger+	Isabelle Schweiter	Natalie Carter
Aven Buchanan	Jaisyn Holland	Parker Bigley
Christina Santiago	Josephine Suwanpoh+	Sophia Loadholtz
Ella Gallagher	Katie Blackwell	Sophie Osmani
Emalee Stepp	Katy Lange	Sydney Ashworth
Emma Corrao	Kaylea Manners	

Alto

Addison Walton+	Jackie Copeland	Rebecca Imbasciani
Bella Baptiste	Kelly Donlan	Savannah Whitley
Ciara Theisz	Leah Brown	Sheridan Anthony
Eva Pierce+	Madeleine Parr	Sofia Vazquez
Grace Hollowell	Marija Grove	Sofia Vergara
Isabel Perrine	Natalie Gillum	Sydney Parow
Isabelle Rhodes	Olive Poole	Ziqi Guo+

Tenor

Anthony Bassett	Jasper Wilson	Luke Brooks
Bruce Russell	Jaylan Garcia	Matt Underwood
Garrett Gass	Joshua Nieves	Michael Creswick
Jacob Walton	Kieran Morales	Nick Gomez-Colon+

Bass

Alex Dickerson	Ian Amos	Riley Jefferson
Colin Cossi+	Issac Markow	Roman Leonard
Dan Klein	Ivan Godoy+	Takoma Williams
Darien Roby	Jeffrey Ruiz	Thayer Causer
Elijah Keyes	Johnny Park	Thomas Stachelski
Habib Jaafar	Kevin Landry	William Palestrant
	Michael Tsougranis	

SP '25 JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY CHORAL AREA

Dr. Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy

Director of Choral Activities, Co-Coordinator of the Ensemble Area

Professor of Choirs, Conducting, and Choral Music Education

Dr. W. Bryce Hayes

Associate Director of Choral Activities

Professor of Choirs, Choral Music Education

Colin Cossi, *DMA Choral Conducting Graduate Student*

Addison Walton, *DMA Choral Conducting Graduate Student*

Ivan Godoy, *MM Choral Conducting Student*

Marlow Lewis, *Choral Librarian*

Nick Gomez-Colon, *TMS PPP (Perfect Pitch Person)*

Sophie Osmani, *Poster Design*

JMU CHORAL COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS

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

Amy Robertson, *The JMU Chorale*

Linlin Uta, *UCTB*

UNDERGRADUATE ENSEMBLE MANAGERS

Mac Creswick, Alex Dickerson, Kelly Donlan, Christina Santiago, *TMS*

Natalie Gillum, Allie Ranton, Emalee Stepp, *JMU Chorale*

Jackie Copeland, Allie Ranton, *Treble Chamber Choir*

Hailey Donithan, Lauren Motter, Natalia Settipani, *UCSA*

Brian Valladares Garmendia, *UCTB*

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