



Moondance

March 4 & 5, 2023

Moonlight Sound Design
Jennifer Holak

Raimonds Tiguls (b. 1972)

An Anthem for Thanksgiving

William Billings (1746-1800)

Partial Lunar Eclipse (*NJ Premiere*)

Lori Laitman (b. 1955)

Moonlight's Watermelon

Richard Hundley (1931-2018)

The Cat and the Moon (*NJ Premiere*)

Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980)

Song to the Moon (La Luna)

Z. Randall Stroepe (b. 1953)

The Rising of the Moon

trad. Irish; arr. Roger Emerson (b. 1950)

INTERMISSION

Home of My Heart

C.H.H. Parry (1848-1918)

Era Oscuro

Sephardic; arr. Rob Dietz (b. 1987)

O Pulse of My Heart

Karen Marroli (b. 1975)

Alyssa Casazza

CHAMBER SINGERS

Look Down, Fair Moon (*S/A*)

Mari E. Valverde (b. 1987)

Sérénade italienne (*T/B*)

Ernest Chausson (1855-1899); arr. Valverde

The Wisdom of the Moon

Susan LaBarr (b. 1981)

Nicole Paige Uvenio

Fly Me to the Moon

Bart Howard (1915-2004)
arr. Robert Page (1927-2016)

Moondance

Van Morrison (b. 1945); arr. Van Cleave

Instrumentalists

Piano: David Davis

Flute/Irish Whistle: Kris Lamb

Electric Bass: Devin McGuire

Oboe: Teddy Love

Bodhrán: John Lamb

Alto Saxophone: Tom Richardson

Percussion: Adrienne Ostrander

Hang: Anthony Carrera

This is a concert that was originally planned for June 2020, and so much has happened since then! Last year, our March concert needed to celebrate *Resilience* and some amazing student compositions written during the pandemic, while our June concert realized a long-planned dream of collaborating with both Mark Miller and Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil. (Music from these concerts is available on our [YouTube](#) channel.) Now, at long last, this wonderful, mysterious moon music has come out of my garage to make us happy (with the addition of a 2022 work by Melissa Dunphy). It allows us to have big thoughts that make us feel small (pondering a lunar eclipse, the horrors of war) and to think about intimate moments of our shared humanity as well (the pupils of a cat, lovers on a boat, the groove of the 1970s). Across ages and cultures, we all share the same moon.

From the composer, **Raimonds Tiguls**:

Moonlight Sound Design was commissioned and premiered by the youth choir Kamēr conducted by Māris Sirmāis in Riga, Latvia in 2012. It is dedicated to my father who died by way of an accident. The title of the piece is inspired by the fact that the studio I have is in my father's country house in an attic room, and the night moon shines directly into it. In the USA, it was performed by the Wartburg Choir conducted by Lee Nelson at the 2017 National Convention of the American Choral Directors Association in Minneapolis.

I (Anne) was at that convention and, as I always do when I hear a piece that grabs me, I bought the music right away for future use.

Tiguls is a Latvian composer of film, instrumental, and choral music. As we learned when we were on tour in the Baltics, choral music plays a huge part in not just that country's culture, but its history. Choral folk music unified Latvia during almost fifty years of Soviet occupation after World War II, when sacred music was banned. The Latvian summer song festival helped Latvians maintain their national identity during this period. The Festival involves a massed choir of nearly 25,000 singers and more than 100,000 spectators in a stadium built expressly for choral singing. Tiguls' song, *Dod, Dieviņi (God Give Me)*, was in the Latvian songfest closing concert in 2013. Tiguls is also a producer, founding and chairing the World Music and Art Fund, which organizes international music concerts on the highest hill, Tigulu hill, in his hometown of Talsi. <https://raimondstiguls.com/>

Moonlight Sound Design is the only known piece written for choir and hang. The hang (pronounced *han* in German) is a musical instrument created by Felix Rohner and Sabina Schärer in Bern, Switzerland. Its name comes from the Bernese-German word for "hand." The instrument is constructed from two half-shells of deep-drawn, nitrided steel sheets glued together at the rim, leaving the inside hollow, and creating a distinct "UFO" shape. The top ("Ding") side has a center "note" hammered into it, and seven "tone fields" hammered around the center.

In the moonlight, time stands still.
The present melts into the past,
and my spirit communes with souls
that have passed before me.

I can never explain, can never tell you.
No!

In the night, it smells of morning.
And in the silence, flowers and birds herald the light.
Tears in my eyes, like dewdrops on flowers that,
with the light, will disappear, having been lost in
darkness.

American colonial composer **William Billings** was perhaps the most gifted composer to emerge from the New England "singing-school" tradition. Although by trade a tanner, he seems to have devoted most of his energy to composing, teaching, and publishing music. A contemporary wrote that Billings "was a singular man, of moderate size, short of one leg, with one eye, without any address & with an uncommon negligence of person. Still, he spake & sung & thought as a man above the common abilities." Billings' music could be forthright, strong and witty. It was very popular in its heyday, but because of the primitive state of copyright law in America at the end of the 18th century, the favorites among his tunes had already been widely reprinted in other people's hymnals by the time he died in poverty at age 53. He is at his naive best in his descriptive setting of Psalm 148 (with his own additions to the text) entitled *An Anthem for Thanksgiving*.

O praise the Lord of heaven;
praise him in the height;
praise him in the depth.
Praise him, all ye angels;
praise Jehovah.
Praise him, sun and moon and blazing comets;
praise the Lord.
Let them praise the Name of the Lord,
for He spake the word, and they were made;
He commanded, and they were created;
Admire, adore.
Ye dragons whose contagious breath
people the dark abodes of death,
change your dire hissings into heav'nly songs,
and praise your maker with your forked tongues.
Fire, hail and snow, wind and storms,
beasts and cattle, creeping insects, flying fowl,
kings and princes, men and angels, praise the Lord.
Jew and gentile, male and female, bond and free,

earth and heaven, land and water, praise the Lord.
Young men and maids, old men and children,
praise the Lord.
Join, creation, preservation, and redemption, join in one;
no exemption, nor dissension, one invention and intention
reigns through the whole to praise the Lord.
Hallelujah, praise the Lord.

Several selections in this concert, such as the next two, are choral re-workings of solo art songs.

Yale-educated **Lori Laitman** has composed multiple operas and choral works and hundreds of songs, setting texts by classical and contemporary poets (including those who published in the Holocaust). Her music is widely performed internationally and throughout the United States, to substantial critical acclaim. *The Journal of Singing* wrote, “It is difficult to think of anyone before the public today who equals her exceptional gifts for embracing a poetic text and giving it new and deeper life through music.” Lori is also the sister of our good friend at Morris Arts, Lynn Siebert!

Lori’s most famous choral piece is *Vedem*, an oratorio that tells the story of the boys of Terezin and their secret journal Vedem (Czech for “In the Lead”). *The Three Feathers* is a one-act children's opera based on a tale by the Brothers Grimm, given a feminist take. The opera *The Scarlet Letter* was recently premiered by Opera Colorado and released by Naxos. If you explore Lori’s unofficial biography, you can read the inspiring story of how she balanced a music career and raising three children, and how she came to vocal writing and art song fairly late in that career. (<http://artsongs.com/informal-biography>)

Lori provides these notes:

Partial Lunar Eclipse sets a poem by Sri Lankan poet Anne Ranasinghe. The song was composed in 2007 for solo voice with piano, the first of two songs of a short cycle entitled *And Music Will Not End*, commissioned by the Lyrica Society of Word Music Relations. In 2018, the Alexandria Choral Society under the direction of Brian J. Isaac, and the Virginia Choral Society under the direction of Sarah Gallo, co-commissioned me to re-envision the song for chorus with piano accompaniment.

The poem reflects the mystery and timelessness of the universe, our place in that universe, and Anne’s realization that she was nearing the end of her life. I found the poem to be particularly well-suited to a choral adaptation, with the colors of the additional vocal lines and the richness of the choral sound helping to create a sense of the vastness of the universe. The piano part proceeds along its own orbit, slightly dissonant and repetitive. Above this the voices glide with several instances of word painting: for example, small descending motifs associated with the word ‘slipping’; a quickened pace as the ‘orb’ begins to ‘sail its lonely journey’; and a climax with a long, loud choral chord emphasizing the idea of a ‘link with the universe’. As the song draws to a close, the

original pacing returns, and the voices and the accompaniment drift off unresolved, cementing the idea of ‘no return’.

“No return” could also be descriptive of the poet’s early life. Anne Ranasinghe (1925-2016) was born Anneliese Katz in Essen, Germany. In 1938, after Kristallnacht, Anne’s parents sent her to live with an aunt in England, as they feared for her safety. Her parents and all other relatives were killed in the Holocaust. Later, Anne left England when she married a Sri Lankan doctor, becoming a citizen there in 1956. Sri Lankan blogger Uditha Devapriya sums it up thus: “the theme she resorted to the most: the thin, fragile line between the past and present, between forgetting and remembering.”

One more thing will aid your understanding of this poem:

pe·num·bra

/pəˈnɛmbərə/

1. the partially shaded outer region of the shadow cast by an opaque object.

ASTRONOMY

2. the shadow cast by the earth or moon over an area experiencing a partial eclipse.

The eerie drama
of moon and earth and cloud:
an eclipsed orb slipping
from penumbra to umbra
to penumbra, reappearing
newly created, from earth’s shadow,
to sail its lonely journey—
golden, remote, mysterious;
a link with the infinite universe.

I too will slip
from penumbra to umbra, but
while the moon navigates the millennia
for me there will be no return.

“A song is like a short story, and from the first notes played by the piano I am telling the listener how I feel about the text.” -**Richard Hundley**

The next art song rendered for chorus is the lilting *Moonlight’s Watermelon* by Hundley, a composer especially known for his American art songs, performed by such greats as Renee Fleming and William Warfield. Hundley was born in Cincinnati, but from the age of seven lived with his supportive and influential grandmother in Covington, KY (which is right across a bridge from Cincinnati.) In high school, he studied piano at the College-Conservatory of Music (CCM) at the University of Cincinnati (where I got my MM and DMA). He was also encouraged and exposed to the arts by a mentor, poet Mary Rodgers Fossit. In 1950, Hundley moved to New York to study piano at Manhattan School of Music but ran out of money after a year and left the

school. For several years, he vacillated between New York and Kentucky, but in 1957, he settled permanently in New York City. In 1960, he won a position in the Metropolitan Opera Chorus, which gave him a great opportunity to begin showing singers his works. His composition teachers in New York included Israel Cirkowitz, William Flanigan, and Virgil Thomson.

In 1967, Hundley began to accompany the vocal studio of the great soprano Zinka Milanov. He said, “My relationship with this great singer gave me one of the deepest inspirations of my life.” Between his own singing, piano study, and intimate knowledge of other singers, especially in the *bel canto* style, he became a master of graceful, singable lines, full of varied textures in both piano and voice. In 1987, the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition designated Richard Hundley as one of only twelve standard American composers for vocalists. He continued to live and compose in New York City until his death in 2018.

Hundley was commissioned by Whitman College Chamber Singers (Walla Walla, WA), Robert Bode, director, to re-set the solo song for chorus and piano. (Robert Bode also got his DMA at Cincinnati with me). The original song was part of the composer’s *Octaves and Sweet Sounds*, a group of songs to contemporary poets. Hundley said,

I was immediately attracted to the poem *Moonlight’s Watermelon* by the magic sounds of the poet’s words. My first consideration in setting this abstract poem to music was to set the words for clarity. For me the poem recalls my childhood living with my grandmother in Kentucky when we ate watermelon, fresh from the garden, on summer evenings.

The text by Jose Garcia Villa (1908-1997) is all about the sound of words and their feel within the mouth. It reminds me of what the judges say to our student composers: “live in the poem; let it roll over your tongue.” Villa was a Filipino poet, literary critic, short story writer, and painter. He was known for the extensive use of punctuation marks— especially commas, which you can see in this poem.

Moonlight’s, watermelon, mellows, light,
Mellowly. Water, mellows, moon, lightly.
Water, mellows, melons, brightly.
Moonlight’s, mellow, to, water’s, sight.
Yes, and, water, mellows, soon,
Quick, as, mellows, the, mellow, moon.
Water, mellows, as, mellows, melody,
Moon, has, its, mellow, secrecy.

Moonlight’s, moon, has, the, mellow,
Secrecy, of, mellowing, water’s, water-
Melons, mellowly, Moonlight’s, a, mellow,
Mollower, being, moon’s, mellow, daughter.
Moonlight’s, melody, alone, has, secrecy,
To, make, watermelons, sweet, and, juicy.

Born and raised in Australia, **Melissa Dunphy** immigrated to the United States in 2003 and has since become an award-winning and acclaimed composer specializing in vocal, political, and theatrical music. She first came to national attention in 2009 when her large-scale choral work *The Gonzales Cantata* was on MSNBC's *The Rachel Maddow Show*. Her choral work *What do you think I fought for at Omaha Beach?* won the Simon Carrington Chamber Singers Composition Competition and has been performed nationally by ensembles including Grammy Award-winning Chanticleer, Cantus, and the St. Louis Chamber Chorus, and by Harmonium's Chamber Singers last June. Dunphy has served as composer-in-residence for the Immaculata Symphony Orchestra, Volti Choral Arts Lab, Volti Choral Institute, and the St. Louis Chamber Chorus. She has a PhD in music composition from the University of Pennsylvania. She currently teaches composition at Rutgers University and is also active in Philadelphia as a sound and lighting designer, actor, theater owner, and podcaster (*The Boghouse*). Last month, her chamber opera *Alice Tierney* was premiered at Oberlin. <https://melissadunphy.com/compositions.php>

The Cat and the Moon was commissioned by the Washington & Lee University Singers (Shane M. Lynch, Director), premiered in April 2022, and taken on tour to Ireland. This is the work's New Jersey premiere.

Minnaloushe, the feline in this William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) poem, was a real cat belonging to Isolde, the daughter of his beloved muse, Maude Gonne. The cat's eyes from *The Cat and the Moon* act as a metaphor for the moon, and they also reflect back the moon in the glowing pupils of the cat. Like the moon, the cat's eyes are constantly changing as they watch over a changing world. The poem also reflects Yeats' interest in occultism, spiritualism, and magic, but grounded in the practical world.

The cat went here and there
And the moon spun round like a top,
And the nearest kin of the moon,
The creeping cat looked up.
Black Minnaloushe stared at the moon,
For, wander and wail as he would,
The pure cold light in the sky
Troubled his animal blood.
Minnaloushe runs in the grass
Lifting his delicate feet.
Do you dance, Minnaloushe, do you dance?
When two close kindred meet,
What better than call a dance?
Maybe the moon may learn,
Tired of that courtly fashion,
A new dance turn.
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
From moonlit place to place,
The sacred moon overhead

Has taken a new phase.
Does Minnaloushe know that his pupils
Will pass from change to change,
And from round to crescent,
From crescent to round they range?
Minnaloushe creeps through the grass
Alone, important and wise,
And lifts to the changing moon
His changing eyes.

Zane Randall Stroope is a well-known festival conductor and a prolific composer who studied composition with Cecil Effinger and Normand Lockwood. Stroope held professor of music positions at Oklahoma State University, Rowan University, and the University of Nebraska. He formed and conducts *The New American Voices*, a recording ensemble that toured the Baltics in the summer of 2022; recent conducting engagements include Hong Kong, Rome, Barcelona, Singapore, Canterbury Cathedral (England), Berliner Dom (Germany), Salzburger Dom (Austria), St. John (Canada), Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and Carnegie Hall. He provides the following notes about *Song to the Moon (La Luna)*:

The text of *Song to the Moon* is a very free paraphrase of a small portion of the original Jaroslav Kvapil (1868-1950) text in Czech, written in 1899. The plot in the complete text centers around a water nymph (named Rusalka) who lives in a fairy-tale kingdom of the Czech imagination. She yearns to be human so she can fall in love with a human prince who has been coming to her pond to bathe. The text for this work appears at the beginning of the story when Rusalka asks the moon to find her lover (the prince) and tell him she loves him.

The text is also the central aria in Dvorak's opera *Rusalka*. Stroope's music combines impressionistic whole tones with neo-romantic Lauridsen-influenced chords, flute and oboe, to paint a shimmering landscape of longing. <https://www.zrstroope.com/>

La Luna,
Your light sees through endless time,
Tell, o tell me, where my love lies.

O moon, e'er you pass,
Wake my dreaming lover.
I am waiting, I am calling,
Tell him, come.
Tell him, O moon.

Light his place.
Moon, help him,
Help him remember and dream of me,
Tell him who is waiting,

Tell him who is longing!

Help to remember our laughter and tears,
Mem'ries of summer nights,
Help him remember our triumphs and fears,
May this remembrance waken him!
Tell that I am holding firm for at least awhile.
Moon, o moon, don't disappear.

O moon, silver moon, in the deep, dark sky,
Your light sees through endless time,
Tell, o tell me, where my love lies.
Tell him come!
Tell him, O moon.

With over 900 choral titles in print and over 30 million copies in circulation, **Roger Emerson** may be the most widely performed composer/arranger of popular choral music in the world today. Born into a musical family in California, he started his career as a rock and roll guitarist and had the luck to study with Kirby Shaw in college. As an educator, he began arranging for his own choirs until his royalties overtook his teacher's salary and he became a full-time composer/arranger.

(The following notes are by Kris Lamb)

This arrangement of *The Rising of the Moon* has an obligato fiddle part, but we will be using an Irish whistle in this concert. The Irish whistle, which is also known as a "penny whistle" (from a time when street musicians would play the whistle for pennies) or a "tin whistle" (from a time when whistles were from a sheet of tin), is a simple, cylindrical, melody instrument with six finger holes and a "whistle" type of mouthpiece. In Ireland, it is called a feadóg or feadán and is used in traditional Irish music, which is a community-focused aural tradition, with regional variations in style.

The rebellion of 1798 was an uprising against British rule in Ireland inspired by the American and French revolutions. The united Irish rebels included both Protestants and Catholics. The Irish, armed with pikes, were annihilated by trained British soldiers with cannons (between 10,000 - 30,000 deaths). Poet John Keegan Casey published a collection of poems and songs in 1866 to celebrate the efforts of the Irish Nationalists of the past and to inspire that same kind of nationalism with his contemporaries. The *Rising of the Moon* was symbolic of the rising of political awakening and a rising spirit of independence unifying the people of Ireland.

When first written, the song was set to two different melodies, the *Wearing of the Green* and another, slower tune in a minor key. In Ireland, the tune set to *Wearing of the Green* was made popular by groups such as the Clancy Brothers and Dubliners. In America, Peter, Paul, and Mary created an arrangement based on the slower melody. This choral arrangement is based on the slower tune in the minor key. (Thank you Kris!)

“Oh! then tell me, Sean O’Farrell, tell me why you hurry so?”
“Hush, a while, just hush and listen,” and his cheeks were all a-glow.
“I bear orders from the Captain, get you ready quick and soon.
For the pikes¹ must be together at the rising of the moon!”

“Oh! then tell me, Sean O’Farrell, where the gath’ring is to be?”
“In the old spot by the river, right-well known to you and me.
One more word for signal token, whistle up the marching tune.
With your pike upon your shoulder, by the rising of the moon.”

There beside the singing river that dark mass of men were seen,
Far above the shining weapons hung their own immortal green.
“Death to ev’ry foe and traitor! Forward! Strike the marching tune,
And, hurrah, my boys, for freedom! ’Tis the rising of the moon.”

1- spears

Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry was an influential 19th-century English composer, probably best known today for his setting of William Blake’s poem *Jerusalem* and the coronation anthem *I Was Glad*. After attempting a career in insurance, Parry worked on Grove’s original *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* and became professor of composition and musical history at the Royal College of Music; he was also professor of music at the University of Oxford from 1900 to 1908. Parry’s influence as a teacher was profound, including among his students Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, Frank Bridge, and John Ireland.

Home of My Heart is No. 4 of *Eight Four-Part Songs* (London, 1898). This is the only work of the eight by poet and essayist Arthur Christopher Benson (1862–1925), a contemporary of Parry’s, who is best known for the words to the British patriotic song *Land of Hope and Glory*. A noted academic and prolific writer, he was also known for his ghost stories. The poem expresses a longing for the beloved by using nature imagery of roses, moon, and pine.

Home of my heart, when wilt thou ope
Thy silent doors to let me in?
What! not one glimpse to quicken hope
Of all that I aspire to win?
So near, and yet so oft denied!
The roses on my trellis throw
Their heedless scent from side to side,
Yet will not whisper what they know.

The yellow moon that hangs and peers
Amid the icy horns on high,
Leans to the list’ning earth, yet fears
To tell the secret of the sky.
O pines that whisper in the wind,

When ling'ring herds from pasture come,
Breathe somewhat of your steadfast mind,
The hour is yours: yet ye are dumb.

Sweet answering eyes, you too have learned
The secret that you will not tell,
I should have known it, but you turned
That moment, and the lashes fell.
Home of my heart, why stand so cold
And silent? there is mirth within:
The sun sinks low, the day is old,
Oh, let the baffled wand'rer in!

A native of Ithaca and graduate of Ithaca College, Los Angeles composer/arranger and vocal percussionist **Rob Dietz** seeks to bring the exciting sounds and textures cultivated by the world of contemporary *a cappella* into a context that can be easily performed by traditional choruses. He is best known for his work as an arranger and group coach for NBC's *The Sing-Off*, and he has also performed, arranged and collaborated with some of the top talent in the vocal music world, including Pentatonix, Smokey Robinson, Sara Bareilles, Incubus, and Pat Benatar. His arrangements have been featured on several TV shows, including *America's Got Talent* (NBC) and *Pitch Slapped* (Lifetime). Rob has a deep passion for *a cappella* education and is a founding co-director (along with Ben Bram and Avi Kaplan) of *A Cappella Academy*. In addition to his work with *Academy*, Rob is also the director of *Legacy*, an auditioned, community youth *a cappella* group based in Los Angeles. <https://www.robdietzmusic.com/>

Era Oscuro was commissioned by The Betsy A Cappella Festival (Miami) as part of their initiative to foster the creation of more Spanish-language choral music. Says Dietz:

In looking for material to adapt, I found this beautiful melody from the Sephardic Jewish tradition that I felt would lend especially well to a contemporary reharmonization. The words tell the story of a person being visited at night by an ex-lover, which in my interpretation begins mysteriously, before exploding into a more up-tempo, angry feel, accompanied by interconnecting hand clap rhythms.

Era oscuro,
Como la medianoche,
Cuando la luna esclareciendo estaba.
Todo callado, todo 'staba en silencio,
Como la nube en la oscuridad.
"Miserable, ¿por que venis ahora?
¿A recordarme de lo que yo pasí?
¿A recordarme de toda la mi vida?"
Estas palabras yo le hablé.

It was dark,
Like midnight,
When the moon was rising.
All was quiet, all was silent,
Like the cloud in the darkness.
"You miserable man, why have you come now?
To remind me of what I've gone through?
To remind me of my life in its entirety?"
These words I spoke to him.

Composer, conductor, and prolific singer-songwriter **Karen Marrolli** is the director of music ministries at Central United Methodist Church in Albuquerque, NM. She holds a DMA in choral conducting from Louisiana State University. She earned a BM in music theory and composition and an MM in choral conducting and sacred music from Westminster Choir College in Princeton. She wrote the text of *O Pulse of My Heart* as an homage to traditional Irish love ballads. <https://www.karenmarrollimusic.com/>

Fair boy, your eyes, they haunt my soul
As the moon haunts the night.
The stars all fall at the sound of your voice.
The mountains sigh at your sight.

Is tu mo ghra, I love you,
A chuisle mo chroí. O pulse of my heart.

No flame can rival the fire of my love,
No canyon was ever so deep.
My soul sings your song through endless night;
Your voice, it haunts my sleep.

No rose is so sweet, no meadow so fair,
No star is more radiant above.
Until death lay me down beneath your shade,
You always shall be my love.

Fair boy, your eyes, they haunt my soul:
A ghost that never shall part.
I wander in starlight, awaiting your call,
O pulse of my heart.

Mari Esabel Valverde composes choral, vocal, symphonic, and chamber works. Her music has been featured at conventions and festivals such as Chorus America, the Oregon Bach Festival, the Association of British Choral Directors, and Texas Music Educators Association. She holds degrees from St. Olaf College, the European American Musical Alliance in Paris, and San Francisco Conservatory of Music. She is also in demand as a singer, educator, adjudicator, and translator. Following six years as a high school classical voice instructor, she spent two years specializing in transgender voice training. <https://marivalverde.com/>

Look Down, Fair Moon is the saddest piece in the concert, setting the Walt Whitman (1819-1892) poem from the American Civil War. Whitman had volunteered in the military hospitals outside Washington, serving not only as an unofficial nurse but also as a sort of morale officer, visiting with the injured men and writing letters for them, an experience that found its way into much of his poetry.

The composer provides the following notes:

Here is a nocturne inspired by poetry contemporary with the American Civil War. In a prayerful tone and imperative form, Whitman pleads for calm and healing for those who are wounded or fallen. The image of the moon, the ‘nimbus’ or rain clouds, and the setting of nighttime are all key: during the night, the living recover from the stresses of the day; the rain falling from the sky is a metaphor for the cleansing of water or tears, and of course, the mysterious beaming moon is a source of spiritual nourishment.

Look down, fair moon, and bathe this scene;
pour softly down night's nimbus floods,
on faces ghastly, swollen, purple;
on the dead, on their backs, with arms toss'd wide,
pour down your unstinted¹ nimbus, sacred moon.

1- unrestrained

In 1879, at the age of 24, **Ernest Chausson**, then an unhappy lawyer, began attending the composition classes of Jules Massenet, who thought very highly of him and helped him enter the Paris Conservatoire, where he also studied with César Franck. Later, as secretary of the Société Nationale de Musique he hosted a great many eminent artists, including the composers Henri Duparc, Gabriel Fauré, and Claude Debussy; poet Stéphane Mallarmé; Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev; and Impressionist painter Claude Monet. Chausson died at 44 from a bicycle accident, leaving only 39 opus-numbered pieces of great quality, many of them songs. *Sérénade italienne*, from *Sept melodies, op. 2* (no. 5) was arranged for TTB in 2020. **Valverde** explains:

This *serenata* is an invitation for a rendezvous on the sea beneath the stars. Accelerated by steady winds, the old Italian fisherman and his sons lead all on board over the rolling swells. Somewhere in their midst, beyond their hearing, in hushed rapture, the mariner's melody seems to float above itself, never quite wanting to touch ground lest it reveals the secret of their love. The passionate scene, framed by waves and splashes, is colored into sound by the piano whose spiraling subdivisions sometimes hasten and whose tolling bass establishes a sense of gravity. All the living, breathing parts converge in varied harmonies, and the story sails off in the distance like a fantasy that escapes with an unknown ending.

Partons en barque sur la mer
Pour passer la nuit aux étoiles.
Vois, il souffle juste assez d'air
Pour enfler la toile des voiles.

Let's go embark on the sea
To spend the night under the stars.
Look! The wind is blowing just enough
To puff out the canvas sails.

Le vieux pêcheur italien
Et ses deux fils qui nous conduisent,
Écoutent, mais n'entendent rien

The old Italian fisherman
And his two sons, who steer us,
Listen but do not make any sense

Aux mots que nos bouches se disent.

Of the words our mouths utter.

Sur la mer calme et sombre, vois:
Nous pouvons échanger nos âmes,
Et nul ne comprendra nos voix
Que la nuit, le ciel et les lames.

On the dark, serene sea, look:
We can exchange souls,
And no one will understand our voices
Except the night, the sky, and the swells of water.

Susan LaBarr is a composer and choral editor living and working in Springfield, MO. She received a Bachelor of Arts in music and a Master of Music in music theory from Missouri State University. Susan has been commissioned by Seraphic Fire, the National ACDA Women's Choir Consortium, the Texas Choral Director's Association's Director's Chorus, and many other groups. She has also sung professionally. Central to Susan's musical vocabulary is the knowledge she gained from studying with Alice Parker at her home in Hawley, MA, where she attended the Composer's Workshop and Melody Studies Workshop in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

She explains:

The Wisdom of the Moon expresses how easy it is to be happy when things are going well, but how we all need to learn to persevere and trust during difficult times, knowing that we will come out better and stronger in the end. It is a sentiment of hope that is reflected in the sound, the tonality, and the joyful triple meter.

Text author Jan Richardson (b. 1967) is an artist, writer, and ordained minister in the United Methodist Church. The missing first line is [God of the two lights,].

I love the sun,
its revealing brilliance,
its lingering warmth;
but in the dark of night,
let me learn
the wisdom of the moon,
how it waxes and wanes
but does not die,
how it gives itself
to shadow,
knowing it will emerge whole
once more.

Bart Howard was a cabaret pianist and songwriter who idolized Cole Porter and is best known for this song, *Fly Me to the Moon*. According to his obituary in *The New York Times*:

Mr. Howard's signature song, originally titled *In Other Words*, was introduced in 1954 by the cabaret singer Felicia Sanders. Its popularity spread after Peggy Lee sang it on *The Ed Sullivan Show* in 1960, and it became a bona fide hit in a 1962 *bossa nova* instrumental

version by Lee's conductor, Joe Harnell. 'I've always said it took me 20 years to find out how to write a song in 20 minutes,' Mr. Howard recalled in an interview with *The New York Times* in 1988. 'The song just fell out of me. One publisher wanted me to change the lyric to 'take me to the moon.' Had I done that I don't know where I'd be today.'

The arrangement is gorgeously choral, coming from Grammy Award-winning **Robert Page**, who was for many years the music director of The Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh and Paul Mellon Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at Carnegie Mellon University. He provides further notes about the arrangement:

American icon Astronaut/Senator John Glenn appeared with the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh in a benefit performance (his sister-in-law was in the choir!) We called the performance *High Flight* and in the performance Mr. Glenn read that sonnet and told us that all astronauts know it well. Selecting music for the performance was tough—we didn't want everything to be 'heavy.' It just so happened that *Fly Me to the Moon* was written during his courtship days, hence we included it.

One more small item of connection— Harmonium tenor Holland Jancaitis sang in that Pittsburgh performance!

Fly me to the moon
And let me play among the stars.
Let me see what spring is like on Jupiter and Mars.
In other words, hold my hand.
In other words, darling, kiss me!

Fill my heart with song
And let me sing forevermore.
You are all I long for,
All I worship and adore.
In other words, please be true.
In other words,
I love you!

A major force in the British R&B scene, Belfast-born, jazz and Celtic-influenced singer-songwriter **Van Morrison** released his third solo album, *Moondance*, in 1970. It became his first million-selling album and reached number twenty-nine on the Billboard charts. The title track, although not released in the US as a single until 1977, received heavy play in FM radio formats. A huge number of hits and the magic of live performance (still) remain his trademark. Awards and accolades include a knighthood, a Brit, an OBE, 6 Grammys, honorary doctorates from Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster, entry into The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the French Ordres Des Artes Et Des Lettres. Show choir arranger **Eric Van Cleave** has made a convincing choral version of *Moondance*, with the option for lots of jazz combo

instruments. The original Van Morrison version, however, is very flute heavy and we strive to capture that in these performances. We hope you will leave whistling the tune!

Well, it's a marvelous night for a moondance
With the stars up above in your eyes.
A fantabulous night to make romance
'Neath the cover of October skies.

And all the leaves on the trees are falling
To the sound of the breezes that blow.
And I'm trying to please to the calling
Of your heartstrings that play soft and low.

And all the night's magic seems to whisper and hush.
And all the soft moonlight seems to shine in your blush.

Can I just have one more moondance with you, my love?
Can I just have one more romance with you, my love?

Well, I wanna make love to you tonight.
I can't wait 'til the morning has come.
And I know now the time is just right
And straight into my arms you will run.

And when you come, my heart will be waiting
To make sure that you're never alone.
There and then all my dreams will come true, dear,
There and then will I make you my own.

And ev'ry time I touch you, you just tremble inside.
And I know how much you want me that you can't hide.

Can I just have one more moondance with you, my love?
Can I just make some more romance with you, my love?