
SOUNDS FROM ST. OLAF
DIGITAL CONCERT SERIES

*LIFT EVERY VOICE AND SING:
A CELEBRATION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSIC*
ANTON ARMSTRONG, *HOST*



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2021

ST. OLAF CHOIR

Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

We Shall Overcome

American freedom song
arr. Tom Trenney (b. 1977)

Austin Meyer '22, *djembe*

We shall overcome. We shall overcome.
We shall overcome someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
That we shall overcome someday.

We are not afraid. We are not afraid.
We are not afraid today.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

We'll walk hand in hand. We'll walk hand in
hand.
We'll walk hand in hand someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

God will see us through. God will see us through.
God will see us through someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

— *American freedom song*

We shall live in peace. We shall live in peace.
We shall live in peace someday.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome someday.

VIKING CHORUS

Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, *conductor*

“Glory” from *Selma*

John Stephens, Lonnie Lynn, and Che Smith
arr. Eugene Rogers

Adam Wang '22, *soloist*; David Ortiz '22, *rap*; Sammy Rivera '22, *rap*;
Grayson Broesch '22, *bass*; Paulo Gladney '19, *drum*

ST. OLAF BAND

Timothy Mahr '78, *conductor*

Of Our New Day Begun

Omar Thomas (b. 1984)

Born to Guyanese parents, Omar Thomas moved to Boston in 2006 to pursue a master of music in jazz composition at the New England Conservatory of Music. He is currently a member of both the harmony and music education departments at the Berklee College of Music. Thomas's music has been performed in concert halls across the country. He has been commissioned to create works in both jazz and classical styles, and major ensembles have performed his works. Dr. Gary Schallert and Western Kentucky University assembled the consortium behind the creation of this composition.

The composer shares these thoughts on his work:

Of Our New Day Begun was written to honor nine beautiful souls who lost their lives to a callous act of hatred and domestic terrorism on the evening of June 17, 2015 while worshipping in their beloved sanctuary, the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church (affectionately referred to as “Mother

Emanuel”) in Charleston, South Carolina. My greatest challenge in creating this work was walking the line between reverence for the victims and their families, and honoring my strong, bitter feelings towards both the perpetrator and the segments of our society that continue to create people like him. I realized that the most powerful musical expression I could offer incorporated elements from both sides of that line, embracing my pain and anger while being moved by the displays of grace and forgiveness demonstrated by the victims’ families.

Historically, Black Americans have, in great number, turned to the church to find refuge and grounding in the most trying of times. Thus, the musical themes and ideas for *Of Our New Day Begun* are rooted in the Black American church tradition. The piece is anchored by James and John Johnson’s time-honored song *Lift Every Voice and Sing* and peppered with blues harmonies and melodies.

—Program note by Timothy Mahr

ST. OLAF CHAPEL CHOIR

Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, *conductor*

My Heart Be Brave

Marques L. A. Garrett (b. 1984)

My heart be brave, and do not falter so,
nor utter more that deep, despairing wail.
Thy way is very dark and drear I know,
But do not let thy strength and courage fail;

Look up, and out, beyond surrounding clouds,
And do not in thine own gross darkness grope,
Rise up, and casting off thy hind’ring shrouds,
Cling thou to this, and ever inspiring hope:

For certain as the raven-winged night
Is followed by the bright and blushing morn,
Thy coming morrow will be clear and bright.
‘Tis darkest when the night is furthest worn.

Tho’ thick the battle and tho’ fierce the fight,
There is power in making for the right.

— James Weldon Johnson

ST. OLAF CHOIR

Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

With What Shall I Come

Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)

Charles Gray, *violin*; Aaron Kohrs '16, *piano*

With what shall I come before the Lord
And bow myself before God on High?

God has told you, O mortal.
God has told you what is good;
To do justice; to love kindness;
To walk humbly with your God.

Shall I come with burnt offerings with calves a
year old?
Give my first born for my transgression,
Fruit of my body, for the sin of the soul?
Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams;
With tens of thousands of rivers of oil.
With what shall I come?

With justice I come before the Lord.
With kindness I come before the Lord.
With love shall I come before the Lord.
With these shall I come.

— Micah 6:6–8

ST. OLAF ORCHESTRA
Steven Amundson, *conductor*

Afro-American Symphony
III. *Animato*

William Grant Still (1895–1978)

William Grant Still was born in Mississippi in 1895 and was raised in Arkansas. He was a gifted musician from childhood, taking formal violin lessons and teaching himself to play clarinet, saxophone, oboe, viola, cello, and double bass. Though he was clearly musically talented, Still's mother advised him to pursue medicine in college, as the opportunities for Black composers were still quite limited. Still took his mother's advice and attended Wilberforce University, but later dropped out because there was no opportunity to study music. Financed by a small inheritance from his father, Still continued his music education at Oberlin University Conservatory. Still's education in various musical styles influenced him throughout his career. He wrote jazz arrangements for Artie Shaw, Paul Whiteman, and W.C. Handy, and also was classically trained by George Whitefield Chadwick of the first New England School and the French-born modern composer Edgard Varèse.

Still's first major composition, *Afro-American Symphony*, highlights this ability to expertly blend jazz, blues, and spirituals with the classical style. Though the movements are named in the European style, Still's notebooks use alternate movement titles such as "Longing," "Sorrow," "Humor," and "Aspiration." By combining and balancing these musical styles, Still was able to tell the story of his life: the spirituals his grandmother used to sing to him, the influences of his mentor George Whitefield Chadwick, and the cultural celebration of the Harlem Renaissance. Still also used this symphony to celebrate genres that were not previously recognized. Though Gershwin had given jazz a place in the concert hall, blues was still not a respected genre at the time of *Afro-American Symphony's* composition, and was viewed as low class or vulgar music. By balancing European and African traditions, Still celebrated his musical upbringing while also introducing audiences to new sounds and styles previously unknown to classical music audiences.

—Program note by Penelope Musto '21

COLLEGIATE CHORALE
Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

Little David Play On Your Harp

Traditional spiritual
arr. Rollo Dilworth (b. 1970)

Emily Albrecht '21, *piano*

Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu, hallelu;
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu.

Little David was a shepherd boy,
He killed Goliath and shouted for joy.

Old Joshua was the son of Nun,
He never would quit 'til his work was done.

David played, he danced and sang
All day 'til the heavens rang.
Singin' songs of joy and praise,
David played his harp for the rest of his days.

— *African American spiritual*
(with additional lyrics by Rollo Dilworth)

ST. OLAF CANTOREI
James E. Bobb, *conductor*

Guide My Feet

Traditional spiritual
arr. Avis D. Graves (b. 1953)

Guide my feet while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Be my friend while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Lord, guide my feet, direct my path,
and keep my way.
Can't make a step without you.
I don't want to run this race in vain.

Lord, guide my feet . . .

Stand by me while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Hold my hand while I run this race,
'cause I don't want to run this race in vain.

Lord, guide my feet . . .

— *Traditional spiritual*

Lord, guide my feet . . .

ST. OLAF CHOIR
Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

City Called Heaven

African American spiritual
arr. Josephine Poelinitz (b. 1944)

Jonah Schmitz '20, *soloist*; Audrey Lane-Getaz '22, *soloist*; Jonathan Madden '20, *piano*

I am a poor pilgrim of sorrow,
I'm left in this old wide world alone!
Oh I ain't got no hope for tomorrow
I'm trying to make heaven my home.

Sometimes I'm tossed and I'm driven, Lord.
Sometimes I just don't know which way to turn
Oh I heard of a city called heaven
I'm trying to make it my home.

— *African American spiritual*

MANITOU SINGERS
Therees Tkach Hibbard, *conductor*

Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me Around

African American spiritual
arr. Rollo Dilworth

Emily Albrecht '21, *piano*

Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around,
Turn me around, turn me around.
Ain't gonna let nobody turn me around.
I'm gonna keep on walkin', keep on talkin',
Marchin' up to Freedom Land.

There are words like Liberty
That almost make me cry.
If you had known what I know
You would know why.

— *African American spiritual*
with additional text from "Words Like Freedom"
by Langston Hughes

There are words like Freedom
Sweet and wonderful to say.
On my heartstrings freedom sings
All day everyday.

ST. OLAF CHOIR

Anton Armstrong '78, *conductor*

Ezekiel Saw de Wheel

Traditional spiritual
arr. William L. Dawson (1899–1990)

Refrain:

Ezekul saw de wheel,
'Way up in de mid'l of de air,
De big wheel run by faith,
An' de lit'l wheel run by de grace of God,
A lit'l wheel in a wheel,
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

Better mind my brother how you walk on de
cross,
'Way in de mid'l of de air,
Your foot migh slip,
An' yer soul get lost,
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

Ole Satan wears a club foot shoe,
'Way in de mid'l of de air,
If you don' mind he'll slip it on you,
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

Refrain

Some go to church for to sing an' shout, Hallelujah!
Befo' six months dey's all turn'd out
'Way in de mid'l of de air.
Ezekul saw de wheel,
'Way in de mid'l of de air.

— *Traditional spiritual*

I Dream A World

André Thomas (b. 1952)

Garrett Bond '19, *piano*

Of such I dream a world where man
No other man will scorn,
Where love will bless the earth
And peace its paths adorn.

I dream a world where all
will know sweet freedom's way,
Where greed no longer saps the soul
Nor avarice blights our day.
A world I dream where black or white,

Whatever race you be,
Will share the bounties of the earth
and every man is free,
Where wretchedness will hang its head
and joy, like a pearl,
attends the needs of all mankind –
Of such I dream, I dream a world.

— *Langston Hughes*

Lift Every Voice for Freedom

arr. Moses G. Hogan Jr. (1957–2003)

Sophie Vogel '22, *narrator*; Elijah Leer '22, *narrator*; Kyle Dacon '22, *piano*

My Country 'tis of Thee,
Sweet Land of liberty, Of Thee I
sing.

Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
'till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmony of liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!

Our fathers' God, to Thee,
Author of liberty, To Thee we sing.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou Who hast brought us thus far
on the way,
Thou Who hast by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by Thy might,
Great God, our King!

Sing a song full of the faith
that the dark past has taught us;
Sing a song full of the hope
that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun
Of our new day begun,
Let us march on,
'til victory is won!

Lift ev'ry voice and sing
'til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmony of liberty!
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea!

Let freedom ring
from ev'ry mountain and ev'ry valley,
On ev'ry hilltop, in ev'ry nation...

Lift ev'ry voice and sing
'til earth and heaven ring,
Land of the noble free,
For all eternity...
Let freedom ring!

— Based on “My Country, 'tis of Thee” (words by Samuel Smith, music by Henry Carey)
and “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (words by James Weldon Johnson, music by J. Rosamond Johnson)

Narration: Deeds like those of September 11, 2001, have the power to shake us profoundly. They prompt us to ask questions for which there are no easy answers, and they cause us to turn as a refuge to the faith that has sustained us as individuals and as a nation through so many trials in the past. They call us to honor those who have given their lives in the cause of freedom, and they challenge us to be vigilant and tireless in our efforts to extend the gift of liberty to all who yearn for it, at home and abroad. They give new depth of meaning to the bold words and stirring melodies of songs that occupy a treasured place in the hearts of Americans, songs that invite us indeed to lift every voice and sing until freedom rings throughout every land on earth.

— Walter Bonam