



the AMERICAN IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE



Presented by the American Choral Directors Association
2025 National Conference

Saturday, March 22 • 8 PM
Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center • Dallas, TX

CONCERT PROGRAM Joshua Habermann, conductor

Please hold your applause until the end of the program.

The Garden

Reading: Our Story

Luna Liberiana

Jesús Bonilla Chavarría (1911-1999)
arr. Anna Song

The Fall

Reading: The Gangs

Identity from Cantos Sagrados

James MacMillan (b. 1959)

The Journey

Reading: Firestorm

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

Trad. African-American
arr. Craig Hella Johnson

Chelsea Helm, soprano

Reading: Song of the Exiles

City Called Heaven

Trad. African-American
arr. Josephine Poelinitz

Marques Jerrell Ruff, bass-baritone

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993)
arr. Arnold Sevier

The Arrival

Reading: Mother Country

Her Beacon-hand Beckons from To the Hands Caroline Shaw (b. 1990)

The Dream

Reading: Mother Country (continued)

North

Ryan O'Neal (Sleeping at Last)
arr. George Chung

Hands

Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

Michael Jones, tenor & Kathlene Ritch, soprano

the AMERICAN TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Luna Liberiana

¡Oh Luna divina que ilumina nuestra tierra!
Misterio insondable que confunde nuestras almas.
Sale el astro, entre nubes, misteriosas y oscuras
que ilumina nuestras almas.

Luna Liberiana, luna para amar,
Misteriosas noches que embriagan de amor.
Es un paraíso que el Creador nos dió,
de mujeres bellas que saben amar.

Luna Liberiana, luna para amar,
yo bajo tu manto lloro de placer,
y en noches calladas cuando todo duerme,
luna Liberiana yo velo por ti.

— Jesús Bonilla Chavarría (1912-1999)

*Oh divine moon that shines down on our land!
Unfathomable mystery that bewitches us.
The star emerges amid deep and dark clouds
illuminating our souls.*

*Liberian moon, moon for loving,
mysterious nights of intoxicating joy,
it is a paradise, given to us by the Creator,
of beautiful women who know of love.*

*Liberian moon, moon for love
under your mantle I cry for joy,
and on quiet nights when everything sleeps,
Liberian moon, I watch for you.*

.....

Identity

What did you say — they found another one?
— I can't hear you — this morning
another one floating in the river?
talk louder — so you didn't even dare
no one can identify him?
the police said not even his mother
not even the mother who bore him
not even she could
they said that?
the other women already tried
— I can't understand what you're saying,

they turned him over and looked at his face,
his hands they looked at, — right!
they're all waiting together,
silent, in mourning,
on the riverbank,
they took him out of the water
he's naked — as the day he was born,
there's a police captain
and they won't leave until I get there?
He doesn't belong to anybody,
you say he doesn't belong to anybody?

if the captain's the same one as last time
he knows what will happen
that body will have my name —
my son's my husband's
my father's name

I'll sign the papers
tell them I'm on my way,
wait for me, and don't let that captain touch him,
don't let that captain take one step closer to him.
Tell them not to worry:
I can bury my own dead.

— Ariel Dorfman (tr. Edie Grossman)

Libera animas omnium fidelium defunctorum de poenis
infernī, et de profundo lacu: libera eas de ore leonis ne
absorbeat eas tartarus, ne cadant in obscurum.

— from the Requiem Mass

*Deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from
the pains of hell, and from the depths of the pit: deliver
them from the lion's mouth, that hell devour them not,
that they fall not into darkness.*

.....

Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child,
a long way from home
Sometimes I feel like I got no friends, a long way from home
Sometimes I feel like I'm almost home, a long way from home

— Traditional African American spiritual

City Called Heaven

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

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

— *Traditional African American*

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Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Precious Lord, take my hand,
lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light.
Take my hand, Lord, and lead me home.

When my way grows drear,
precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone,
at the river, Lord, I stand,
guide my feet and hold my hand.
Take my hand, Lord, and lead me home.

— *Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993)*

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Her Beacon-hand Beckons

Her beacon-hand beckons:
give — give to me
those yearning to breathe free
tempest-tossed they cannot see
what lies beyond the olive tree
whose branch was lost amid the pleas
for mercy, mercy
give — give to me
your tired fighters fleeing flying
from the
from the
from
let them
i will be your refuge
i will be your refuge
i will be
i will be
we will be
we will be your refuge.

— *Text by Caroline Shaw, responding to
"The New Colossus" by Emma Lazarus*

North

We will call this place our home
The dirt in which our roots may grow
Though the storms will push and pull
We will call this place our home

We'll tell our stories on these walls
Every year measure how tall
And just like a work of art
We'll tell our stories on these walls

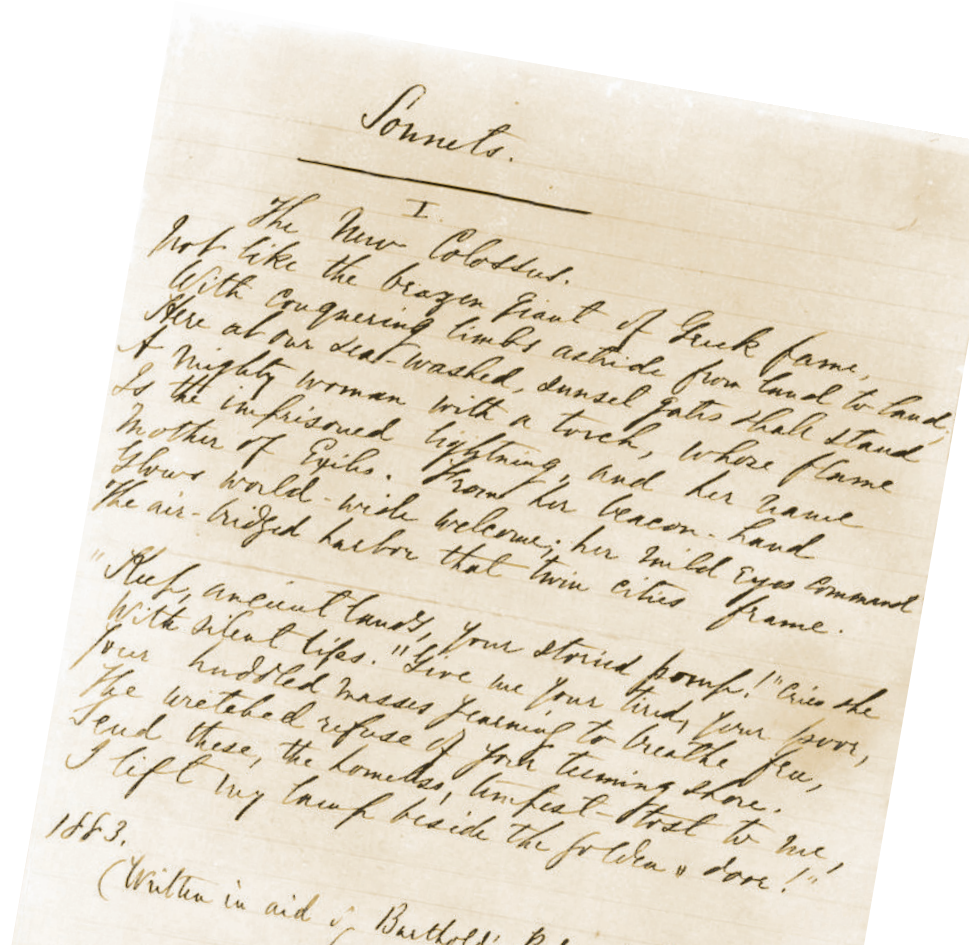
*Let the years we're here be kind
Let our hearts like doors open wide, open wide
Settle our bones like wood over time, over time
Give us bread, give us salt, give us wine*

A little broken, little new
We are the impact and the glue
Capable more than we know
We'll call this fixer upper home

With each year our color fades
Slowly our paint chips away
But we will find the strength
And the nerve it takes
To repaint, and repaint, and repaint every day

Smaller than dust on this map
Lies the greatest thing we have
The dirt in which our roots may grow
And the right to call it home

— *Ryan O'Neal (b. 1981)*



PROGRAM NOTES

With each generation the story of the United States has taken shape, deeply influenced by native populations as well as the people who have come to her shores. Our home in Santa Fe and the surrounding region have been a particularly fertile crossroads of Hispanic, Anglo, and Native cultures, all contributing to the story of our community. In today's program we reflect on that story through the eyes of those who have sought a better life in the United States. Through first person accounts, songs, and poems, we seek to deepen our understanding of the experience of those coming north, and how each arrival shapes our shared history.

Our story begins at a time when the decision to leave home was still far off, and the shadow of violence had not yet clouded the sky (The Garden). When the darkness comes it is swift and it is brutal (The Fall), leaving no choice but to abandon everything that is familiar and seek another place. We set out, and the path is marked by chapters of sorrow and hope, echoing the experience of so many generations that have come before. Though there are moments of despair, faith in a better future inspires us, and we keep moving (The Journey). Richard Blanco's poem *Mother Country* takes us back to 1968 and a mother's love for a family adapting to a strange new land. Caroline Shaw's *Her Beacon-hand Beckons* recalls the words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty and promises made but not always kept (The Arrival).

Our final chapter (The Dream) sees us looking forward. Where can we go from here? Easy answers elude us. Could singing together be one way, perhaps, to truly see one another? *North*, by the band Sleeping At Last and Jocelyn Hagen's *Hands* take us to that place, beyond words, where we can look into another's eyes and stand united, together.

— Joshua Habermann

SANTA FE DESERT CHORALE ARTISTS

SOPRANO

Chelsea Helm
Sarah Moyer
Jennifer Perez
Savannah Porter
Kathlene Ritch
Alissa Ruth Suver

ALTO

Sarah Brauer
Dianna Grabowski
Kate Maroney
Sarah Nickerson
Lindsay Pope
Angela Young Smucker

TENOR

Chris Albanese
George Case
Brad Diamond
Erik Gustafson
Michael Jones
Bradley Naylor

BASS

Simon Barrad
James K. Bass
John Buffett
Harris Ipock
Neil Netherly
Marques Jerrell Ruff

GUEST ARTISTS

Nathan Salazar, piano
Ama Zathura, narrator



Santa Fe Desert Chorale artist biographies and headshots are available at desertchorale.org/artists

[CLICK HERE](#) TO SEE WHAT'S COMING NEXT FOR SANTA FE DESERT CHORALE

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Sherry Kelsey & George Duncan | Susie & Jerry Wilson | Jim & Karla Wintle



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