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# ST. OLAF CHAPEL CHOIR

TESFA WONDEMAGEGNEHU, *CONDUCTOR*

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## FINDING STRENGTH AND HOPE



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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2019 | 7:30 P.M.

*BOE MEMORIAL CHAPEL*

# FINDING STRENGTH AND HOPE

Hope is a movement forward with confidence, not a desired future where you have no agency.

–Matthew Marohl, college pastor

Loss and hope: two threads inexplicably entwined with one another. The two cannot be separated, as one cannot exist without the other. They live together in chaos, in grief, and in disaster—they also live together in peace, in healing, and in change. Knitted together, hope is sometimes lost in the fabric of life’s design. Universal themes appear in personal experiences of loss. In times of sorrow, artists often turn to their craft to find solace. Music provides a voice through which grief and hope can sing. Hope manifests in many ways: light, clarity, community, or simply joy. There is *always* hope.

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

### *Stille Tränen*

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)  
arr. Clara Schumann (1819-1896)

Edward Rothmel, *piano*

In the wake of her husband’s death in 1856, Clara Schumann reached for earlier memories of Robert through an arrangement of his piece, *Stille Tränen*. Newly married, Clara was struck by the sensitivity her husband was able to exercise when binding Justinus Kerner’s words to his own composition. Her piano arrangement of her husband’s piece allowed the two lovers to dwell in each other’s company long after they left this world.

From sleep you have risen  
And walk through the meadow.  
Everywhere lies  
Heaven’s wondrous blue.

As long as, free of care, you have  
Been slumbering, free of pain,  
Heaven has, till morning,  
Poured down many tears.

Often on silent nights  
Many a man weeps his grief away,  
And in the morning you imagine  
His heart is ever happy.

–Justinus Kerner, translation by Richard Stokes

## Sweet Rivers

Shawn Kirchner (b. 1970)

22:30 String Quartet

Grace Pugh '21, Alex Long '22, Meleah Chang '22, Kalli Sobania '22

Austin Meyer '22, *percussion*

Hope has the ability to cast a great light, but if one is not pursuing hope, darkness is quick to overcast it. In the early 1800s, the text for Shawn Kirchner’s “Sweet Rivers” was found in the Methodist church by John A. Granade. Over two hundred years later, the same text inspired Eric Nelson to commission a choral piece that emulates crossing over to Canaan after death. The text is set to an older melody of Kirchner’s “City of Seven Gates,” which alludes to J.R.R. Tolkien’s fictional setting of Middle Earth. A white tree stands in the realm’s capital city, symbolizing all light that has ever been created. This light is heard in the heartening folk melodies and rhythms that rise and fall in the piano throughout the piece.

Sweet rivers of redeeming love  
Lie just before mine eyes;  
Had I the pinions of a dove,  
I'd to those rivers fly.  
I'd rise superior to my pain,  
With joy and outstrip the wind:  
I'd cross o'er Jordan's stormy waves  
And leave the world behind.

A few more days, or years at most,  
My troubles will be o'er:  
I hope to join the heavenly host  
on Canaan's happy shore.

My rapt'rous soul shall drink and feast  
in love's unbounded sea,  
The glorious hope of endless rest  
is ravishing to me.

O! come, my Savior, come away,  
And bear me through the sky,  
Nor let thy chariot wheels delay,  
But quickly draw though nigh.  
Then I shall join the angel throng  
And circle round thy throne;  
I'll sing through all the ages long,  
And joy to be thine own.

—John Adam Granade

## Hope and Quietly Wait

Paul Rudoi (b. 1985) and Thad Fiscella (b. 1978)

With great highs come great lows. It is so easy to lose hope when the lives of loved ones dim and come to a close. “Hope and Quietly Wait,” commissioned by Tim Schmidt, expresses a deeply rooted knowledge that the impact of human love transcends the bonds of mortality. Schmidt was inspired to commission this piece in 2014 after losing his father to an ongoing battle with dementia. The piano accompaniment, composed by Thad Fiscella, clearly mimics the meditative sound of breathing, a natural rhythm that evokes a sense of peace. The text, borrowed from Lamentations and Romans, conveys a passionate message that brought composer Paul John Rudoi closer to God than he'd ever been. The pastoral nature of the piece paints an image of how unremarkable death can be. Rather than a sharp line, loss is so often like watching somebody walk over the edge of the horizon. Having hope is not giving up on the memory of a loved one, but rather recognizing that true separation does not exist.

It is good that one should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.  
For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future,  
nor any powers,  
neither height nor depth,  
nor anything else in all creation  
will be able to separate us from the love of God.

—Romans 8:38–39 and Lamentations 3:26

## Weep Not for Him

Tesfa Wondemagegnehu (b. 1982)

Life sustains itself in moments of clarity. For Tesfa Wondemagegnehu, this hope came after the loss of his mother, Cherrie Bell Wondemagegnehu. Grief is a nonlinear process. Mourning leaves most feeling distraught or frozen, trying to find a way to comprehend a loved one being stolen from them by death. “Weep Not for Him” was commissioned by Dr. Matthew Culloton and The Singers for the 2016 Composer's Lab. Walking through loss can oftentimes feel like wandering through a haze. Wondemagegnehu found purpose in an unexpected place, personified by his pursuit of a second master's degree in choral conducting. While the piece allows itself to explore tragedy, there is clarity to be found in the dissonance. Wondemagegnehu encapsulated his experience with finding clarity in the piece's harmonically piercing climax. The piece also ends unresolved to explain how hope does not cure loss but walks alongside it.

Thou arrant robber, Death!  
Couldst thou not find  
Some lesser one than he  
To rob of breath,—  
Some poorer mind  
Thy prey to be?

His mind was like the sky,—  
As pure and free;  
His heart was broad and open  
As the sea.  
His soul shone purely through his face,  
And Love made him her dwelling place.

Not less the scholar than the friend,  
Not less a friend than man;  
The manly life did shorter end  
Because so broad it ran.

Weep not for him, unhappy Muse!  
His merits found a grander use  
Some other—where. God wisely sees  
The place that needs his qualities.  
Weep not for him, for when Death lowers  
O'er youth's ambrosia-scented bowers  
He only plucks the choicest flowers.

—Paul Laurence Dunbar

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

### Horn Trio in E-flat Major III. *Adagio mesto*

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Delaney Breen '20, *horn*  
Madeline Miller '20, *violin*  
Edward Rothmel, *piano*

After the passing of his mother in 1865, Johannes Brahms latched onto the past through a piece that remained unfinished. The third movement of his Horn Trio in E Flat Major relies heavily on melancholic harmony. The somber attitude of the piece is highlighted by his use of natural horn, whose tone he deemed more reminiscent of the haunting theme he wished to convey.

## A Hive of Frightened Bees (2019)

Andrea Ramsey

(Premiere Performance)

**Content Warning:** “A Hive of Frightened Bees” contains themes of mass gun violence.

Young people possess the capability to inspire change and hope in a downtrodden world. Mass school shootings have left students all around the United States feeling insecure about the systems created to protect them. Taylor Huntley, a high school student from Colorado, was deeply impacted by the shooting on February 14, 2018 in Parkland, Florida. Less than a week after the tragedy, students in Huntley's high school found a threat written in one of the bathrooms. Huntley was empowered to share her fears and hopes in her poem, “A Hope for Change.” Ramsey's own experience with immense grief, namely the loss of both of her parents, allowed her to tap into the kind of anxiety necessary to compose “A Hive of Frightened Bees.” She employs the physicalization of anxiety and the pain of loss through the sound of heartbeats and rapid breathing. Ramsey highlights certain lines by having them sung solely by the alto section, ending the piece with a plea for change.

There is an ache in my chest  
from the emotions that swarm  
Like a hive of frightened bees.  
There are tears in my eyes,  
As an imitation for the drops  
Of blood shed in hatred.  
My head is stuffed with cotton,  
With thoughts I cannot comprehend,  
So instead, I try to ignore.  
I need to protect my family,  
I need to protect my friends,  
I need to protect my heart.

They say I am safe.  
But they cannot guarantee.  
They cannot dig the hurt,  
The hatred in their souls.  
Of those that wish to hurt  
For revenge we cannot know.  
No matter what we do,  
No matter what is said,  
They always find a way.  
They are blind towards the future,  
The past, and the present.  
I hope one day we will change.

—Taylor Huntley

## MUSICAL REFLECTION

### Prayer

Ricky Ian Gordon (b. 1956)

Hannah Phipps '20, *soprano*

Loss finds a home in the lyrics of “Prayer.” The piece originally came out of a song cycle by composer H. Leslie Adams, and was later arranged in 1993 by Ricky Ian Gordon. The words of the piece belong to Langston Hughes, a prolific Harlem Renaissance poet whose writing focused on the black experience. Gordon’s setting of the text utilizes postwar jazz chords, giving way to imagery of a decade steeped in mass trauma. Hughes’s text illuminates the ways in which loss can feel overwhelming, and begs to know which course of action will bring about healing. The piece calls into question the actionable nature of grief.

I ask you this:  
Which way to go?  
I ask you this:  
Which sin to bear?  
Which crown to put  
Upon my hair?  
I do not know,  
Lord God,  
I do not know.

–Langston Hughes

## WORDS OF HOPE

Matthew Marohl, *college pastor*

### When Thunder Comes

Mari Ésabel Valverde '10 (b. 1987)

St. Olaf Taiko

Mia Denuit '21, Jacob Franzmeier '22, Mickey TerLouw '20

There is not always thunder when lightning appears in the sky. “When Thunder Comes” draws its name from a poetry book written by U.S. Children’s Poet Laureate, J. Patrick Lewis. This book of poetry gives voice to 17 different civil rights activists, including those mentioned in Mari Ésabel Valverde’s composition. Marginalized communities have been, and still are, working against America’s history of systemic erasure. This piece was commissioned by Minnesota’s LGBTQA One Voice Mixed Chorus and was premiered in April 2016, less than a year after same-sex marriage was legalized in the United States. Lightning strikes when tragedy occurs, but the thunder of action does not always follow. These “tales of thunder” give voice to activists whose commitment to and hope for a better tomorrow spurred them to pick up their drums to battle injustice and unify voices, no matter how small.

### Dance in the Graveyards

Delta Rae

arr. Justin Havard (b. 1980)

Mila New '22, *soloist*

Gabbie Holtzman '21, Ruby Erickson '21, Joanna Hancock '20, Jenna Leonard '21, Alina Villa '20, *vocal quintet*

Austin Meyer '22, *percussion*

Originally composed by folk band Delta Rae, the bright tones of “Dance in the Graveyards” evoke a joyous acceptance of hope as something that can be possessed. The solo lines lead the melody, but as the piece builds to the climax, the supportive background vocals join in unison to become an equal part of the larger tapestry. Delta Rae, well known for their passionate performances, intended their album Carry the Fire, from which the piece was borrowed, to celebrate the intensity of bonds formed between loved ones. The piece’s collective and communal nature highlights this desire, demonstrating the ways in which the voices of those who came before are ever ringing throughout the present, and how love and hope shared with others will go on to inspire growth and change for generations to come.

When I die, I don't want to rest in peace.  
I want to dance in joy!  
I want to dance in the graveyards.  
And while I'm alive,  
I don't want to be alone,  
Mourning the ones who came before.  
I want to dance with them some more  
Let's dance in the graveyards!

Gloria! Like some other name  
We kept on calling ya  
And waiting for change.  
But I belong to all of your mysteries.

And all of us  
Are meant for the fire,

But we keep rising up  
And walking the wires.  
So when we go below,  
Don't lose us in mourning.

Oh, my love, don't cry when I'm gone.  
I will lift you up, the air in your lungs,  
And when you reach for me,  
Dance in the darkness!

And we will walk beyond  
Our daughters and sons!  
They will carry on  
Like when we were young  
And we will stand aside,  
and breathe in the new life!

*-Eric Hölljes and Ian Richard Hölljes*

Love is intent. Connections and communities made through love enable us to mend wounds and stitch together what has been separated. In moments of loss, holding tightly to hope can evoke a sense of purpose that empowers us to make real, lasting change within our communities and within ourselves, never forgetting the love we have been given and the love we leave behind.

*Program notes compiled by Joanna Hancock '20 and Gabbie Holtzman '21*

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Guest collaborative pianist, **Dr. Edward Rothmel**, has worked extensively as a pianist, coach, and conductor throughout the United States and abroad. Dr. Rothmel recently joined the faculty at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute, where he serves as coach and pianist to exceptional young singers from across the globe. He has also enjoyed a close affiliation with Eastman Opera Theatre as assistant conductor and chorus master, where he spent several seasons coaching undergraduate and graduate students on all aspects of role preparation, in addition to developing the chorus musically and conducting chorus rehearsals. With the Eastman Symphony Orchestra, Dr. Rothmel served as rehearsal pianist and coach to Renée Fleming, collaborating with her in preparation for the premiere of *Letters from Georgia* by Kevin Puts. As a collaborative pianist, Dr. Rothmel has appeared in recital at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall with tenor Albert Lee, and as a guest at institutions such as Pennsylvania State University, Oklahoma City University, and Mississippi College. His presentation "Enhancing Opera Scenes Through Use of Reduced Orchestration" was nominated for the 2018 Lecture Recital Prize at the Eastman School of Music. He received his DMA in piano accompanying and chamber music, with a minor in vocal coaching from the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Dr. Jean Barr and was the recipient of the 2019 Jean Barr Award. He is also a graduate of Florida State University's College of Music, where he earned both his bachelor of music and master of music in piano performance.

# ST. OLAF CHAPEL CHOIR

## TESFA WONDEMAGEGNEHU, CONDUCTOR

### SOPRANO I

Cara Almquist, *Plymouth, Minn.*  
Katie Anderson, *St. Paul, Minn.*  
Grace Bloomquist, *Maple Plain, Minn.*  
Jessica Folson, *Grand Forks, N.D.*  
Annika Hustad, *Clinton, Wash.*  
Blake Ormond, *Chicago, Ill.*  
Aleksz Thoms, *Bronxville, N.Y.*  
Sydney Wagner, *Portland, Ore.*  
\* Lauren Zimmerman, *Littleton, Colo.*

### SOPRANO II

Hannah Buttshaw, *Platte City, Mo.*  
Jessie Camp, *St. Michael, Minn.*  
Danielle Croll, *Washburn, Wis.*  
• Stephanie Curran, *Duluth, Minn.*  
Lauren Flaten, *Roseville, Minn.*  
Gabbie Holtzman, *Cedar Falls, Iowa*  
Kylie Landa, *Excelsior, Minn.*  
Miranda Lentz, *Pearl City, Hawaii*  
Emma May, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
• Sally Olmstead, *Wichita, Kan.*  
\* Maddie Peterson, *St. Michael, Minn.*  
Daaé Ransom, *Chicopee, Mass.*  
Emmaly Smith, *Hamel, Minn.*  
Joanna Thuessen, *Indianapolis, Ind.*  
Nyagua Tut, *Storm Lake, Iowa*  
Lacy Williams, *Kansas City, Mo.*  
Rachel Wyffels, *Plymouth, Minn.*

### ALTO I

Kiernan Bartlett, *Arlington, Va.*  
Holly Beck, *Davenport, Iowa*  
Grace Cline, *Savage, Minn.*  
Emma Daggett, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
\* Ruby Erickson, *Fayetteville, Ark.*  
Lauren Flory, *Cedar Rapids, Iowa*  
Zoë García, *Davis, Calif.*  
Sarah Golemon-Mercer, *Hamden, Conn.*  
Solveig Haines, *Golden Valley, Minn.*  
• Joanna Hancock, *Pierre, S.D.*  
Julia Himmelberger, *Wellesley Hills, Mass.*  
Emma Jenks, *Andover, Minn.*  
Jenna Leonard, *Jordan, Minn.*  
Grace Lindmark, *St. Paul, Minn.*  
Paige Marshall, *Des Moines, Iowa*  
Audrey Mitchell, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
Narumi Nobuto, *Hiroshima, Japan*  
\* Hannah Phipps, *Fort Collins, Colo.*  
Emily Patterson, *Elmhurst, Ill.*  
Hannah Prichard, *Greensburg, Penn.*

Abby Schneekloth, *Rochester, Minn.*  
Sarah Shapiro, *Chicago, Ill.*  
Lauren Williams, *Tampa, Fla.*

### ALTO II

Katrina Andrusick, *Cold Spring, Minn.*  
Synneva Bratland, *Northfield, Minn.*  
Esther Frantzich, *Stillwater, Minn.*  
Daniel Haakenson, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
Danielle Hansen, *Tofte, Minn.*  
Eleanor Hastings, *Edina, Minn.*  
Amelia Hillery, *Portland, Ore.*  
Ashlyn May, *Gravois Mills, Mo.*  
Mila New, *Eagan, Minn.*  
Kylie Poxon, *Hopkins, Minn.*  
Nina Rickett-Green, *Skokie, Ill.*  
Rachel Raser, *Wheaton, Ill.*  
Haley Rogers, *St. Michael, Minn.*  
Oliver Schulenburg, *Portland, Ore.*  
Elmira Sperling, *Salt Lake City, Utah*  
Nina Vang, *Shoreview, Minn.*  
Alina Villa, *Gresham, Ore.*  
Anna Weisenburger, *Owatonna, Minn.*

### TENOR I

Charlie Carroll, *Fort Collins, Colo.*  
\* Ben Christason, *Cedar Falls, Iowa*  
Eli Duinincq, *Brainerd, Minn.*  
Paul Heltemes, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
Ben Homan, *Waunakee, Wis.*  
Leo Matter, *Cincinnati, Ohio*  
Andrew Myers, *River Falls, Wis.*  
John Nguyen, *Crystal, Minn.*  
Collin Roes, *Onalaska, Wis.*  
Jared Vidervol, *Andover, Minn.*

### TENOR II

Jack Buendorf, *Albert Lea, Minn.*  
Thomas Clark, *Hopkins, Minn.*  
Wade Ebert, *Delta, Colo.*  
Drew Hemer, *Minneapolis, Minn.*  
Henry Henson, *Arden Hills, Minn.*  
Henry Jetmore, *River Falls, Wis.*  
David Johnson, *Stillwater, Minn.*  
Gabriel Michor, *Western Springs, Ill.*  
Thomas Pfingsten, *Mankato, Minn.*  
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Richie Spahn, *Dekalb, Ill.*  
Thomas Weinheimer, *River Forest, Ill.*  
\* Jacob West, *Omaha, Neb.*

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• Andrew Gonzalez, *Chicago, Ill.*  
Seth Johnson, *Chanhasen, Minn.*  
Luke Hering, *Lake Holcombe, Wis.*  
James Levi, *Swarthmore, Penn.*  
Alex Mench, *Annandale, Va.*  
Austin Meyer, *Sioux Falls, S.D.*  
Jeffrey Nolan, *McLean, Va.*  
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John Reynolds, *St. Paul, Minn.*  
Bjorn Vogen, *River Forest, Ill.*

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Ben Cumpston, *Niles, Ill.*  
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Jake Gesell, *Hartland, Wis.*  
Adam Hecker, *Edina, Minn.*  
Jakob Hofstad, *Fridley, Minn.*  
Marcel Hones, *Ripon, Wis.*  
Colin Lang, *Boxborough, Mass.*  
Zack Light, *Sharon, Mass.*  
Julian Malaby, *Shorewood, Wis.*  
\* Will Rand, *Ottawa Hills, Ohio*  
Henry Specker, *Los Altos, Calif.*  
Chajli Thao, *Hugo, Minn.*  
Chris van Dover, *Ithaca, N.Y.*  
Geoffrey van Dover, *Ithaca, N.Y.*

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- \* Section Leader

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Connor Smith, *assistant director of music organizations for audience development*  
Sarah Gardner '11, *coordinator of music organizations*  
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Cheryl Bristol, *academic administrative assistant—music*  
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