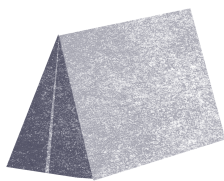


where you go  
i will go







Doctor of Musical Arts Degree Recital  
Yale School of Music  
Kevin Vondrak, *conductor*

## **where you go i will go**

Sunday, November 2, 2025 at 5pm  
Marquand Chapel, Yale Divinity School  
New Haven, Connecticut

*This recital is being video and audio recorded.  
Please silence any noisemaking devices.*

*Program art by Elizabeth Haidle. Used with kind permission.*

## PROGRAM

“where you go i will go”

\* \* \*

### I.

**"Letter to my father" from Coloring Book (2015)**

Ted Hearne

Eden Bartholomew & Sea Han, *soprano*  
Susanna Mackay & Bridget Nixon, *alto*  
Jasper Schoff & Alex Whittington, *tenor*  
Matthew Cramer & Matthew Dexter, *bass*

### II.

**Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr, BuxWV 41**

Dieterich Buxtehude

Izzy Barbato & Eden Bartholomew, *soprano*  
Scottie Rogers, *female countertenor*  
Sam Denler, *tenor*  
Matthew Dexter, *bass*

### III.

**Ne irascaris Domine – Civitas sancti tui (1581)**

William Byrd

**where you go (2015)**

David Lang

**"Conversation in the mountains"  
from Where flames a word (2009)**

Kile Smith

**SHIFT (2020/2021)**

Ayanna Woods

**2. Shift**

**3. Bound**

\* \* \*

*The concert will be performed with short stage changes between each section.*

*Please hold applause until the end of each section.*

*The total run time is approximately 75 minutes.*

***a note on the program:***

*What knits us  
to the soul of another  
the way dusk light becomes  
a part of darkness returning*

– Kai Hoffman-Krull

Choirs are musical communities, microcosms of society at large. To them, one brings a singular voice and perspective, and within them many contribute and listen. Along the way something richer, fuller, and more numerous is made. Choirs express artistic and musical sentiments while enacting a collective, collaborative culture. In this way, the essence of choral singing is connection.

The inspiration for this recital comes from the opening lines of Kai Hoffman-Krull's poem, printed above. It is a rumination on our spiritual and elemental interconnectedness, and its theme binds together the works on tonight's program. These works ask questions about how we relate to one another and to our shared histories. They navigate liminal spaces of longing, hope, patience, and commitment; they sit in the stillness of twilight. At one introspective moment, the words seem to even question themselves.

Graduate school is naturally a time of questioning, and in a music school the subject is artistic expression. To do this as a choral conductor is a unique enterprise, situated at the nexus of individual thought and group leadership. For the first choral conducting seminar each academic year, our studio visits the music library, where archivists assemble materials from the extensive historical collections. This year, I found myself with a box of papers from the preeminent 20th-century American conductor Robert Shaw. He was known to write "Dear People" letters, which mixed practical feedback on musical matters with philosophical rumination about art and life. His 1946 letter to the Collegiate Chorale contains a thought which has stuck with me since that day I held it in my hands, a reframing of the word "communicate" in the context of artistic expression:

*The essential fact is that music is a language. It wants to communicate – which is to say that it wants to make a community, which is to say that it wants to make one out of many.*

What you hear tonight is a group of people coming together to "communicate." We sing in an attempt to express and understand our complex lives, shaped by myriad personal and collective histories. We sing to unweave the multitudes and contradictions of the vast human experience. We sing to knit back together, even for a brief dusk hour, a more interconnected world.

– Kevin Vondrak  
New Haven, November 2025

## YALE RECITAL CHORUS

Izzy Barbato  
Eden Bartholomew  
Matthew Cramer  
Grace Currie  
Gwen DeLaney  
Sam Denler  
Brian De Stefano  
Matthew Dexter  
Will Doreza  
Sea Han  
Susanna Mackay  
Elijah McCormack  
Bridget Nixon  
John Raskopf  
John Richardson  
Scottie Rogers  
Jasper Schoff  
Jamie Shepherd  
Reid Simmons  
Sarah Sparling  
Sara Stebbins  
Noah Stein  
Kit Thickett  
Katie Tiemeyer  
Anthony Washington  
Caspar Wein  
JoEllen West  
Alex Whittington  
Hyunju Yang  
Lucas Zuehl

Kevin Vondrak, *conductor*  
Anne Maria Lim, *rehearsal keyboardist*

## Buxtehude Ensemble

Josh Liu and Maya Ito Johnson, *violin*  
Cat Slowik, *viola da gamba*  
Isaiah Chapman, *viola*  
Joshua Rhodes, *violone*  
Anne Maria Lim, *chamber organ*



## NOTES & TEXTS

### “Letter to my father” from *Coloring Book*

music by Ted Hearne (b. 1982)

text by Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960)

*a note from the conductor:*

Ted Hearne’s *Coloring Book* is a collection of five songs written for the vocal octet Roomful of Teeth, setting the words of three Black American writers: Zora Neale Hurston, James Baldwin, and Claudia Rankine. The inspiration for the collection comes from a 2015 New York Times Magazine article by the white non-fiction author Eula Biss, who observes that “whiteness is not a kinship or culture... Whiteness is not who you are. Which is why it’s entirely possible to despise whiteness without disliking yourself.” Hearne, an ambitious composer unafraid of social critique, describes setting the words by Black authors not as an “attempt to embody these writers, and never to speak for them, but because I wanted to know: Could I better understand their words by speaking them in my own voice? ...could we best reckon with the construction of race and ourselves as white people by learning from the words of non-white writers?”

“Letter to my father,” the third song in *Coloring Book*, adapts Zora Neale Hurston’s 1928 essay on the discovery of her identity and sense of self-pride. The scene portrays an experience with a white friend at a jazz cafe, and the heightened contrast between her profound and his passive reaction to the music (the friend’s comment on the band’s performance is apathetic: “Good music they have here”). Hearne’s setting foregrounds the “gulf of understanding” between the two, which he relates to the growing rift with his own father provoked by conversations surrounding racism, politics and art. In reformatting the text so that the words stay in the same sequence but that each line begins and ends with a pronoun, he highlights the relational element—two people and how they connect. After an opening section in which two groups in the ensemble seem to talk past each other in strident tones, the music settles into a space of sonic and emotional tenderness, capturing in intimate strokes the desire to express oneself and, at its core, to be understood.

Him. He  
He has only heard what I  
I felt. He  
He is far away but I  
I see him.  
Him but dimly across the ocean and the continent that have fallen between us.  
Us. He  
He is so pale with his whiteness then and I  
I am so colored.  
Music. The great blobs of purple and red emotion have not touched him.  
He is so pale with his whiteness then and I am so colored.

— from “How it feels to be colored me” (1928), adapted by the composer.

## Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr, BuxWV 41

music by Dieterich Buxtehude (1637–1707), based on an anonymous 16th-century chorale melody  
text by Martin Schalling (1532–1608)

*a note from the conductor:*

The Danish composer Dieterich Buxtehude, one of the most influential composers of the 17th century, held an important church position in Northern Germany: organist at Marienkirche in Lübeck. Well known both then and now, his compositions for organ make innovative use of the instrument's pedal board. There is also the famous story of a 20 year-old Johann Sebastian Bach walking 250 miles to hear and learn from the 68-year old master (he ended up staying three months instead of the four weeks permitted by his employer, a mark of the elder's influence on a young Bach). It was at *Abendmusiken*, a Sunday afternoon Advent concert series at Marienkirche, that Buxtehude premiered many of his vocal works, including *Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr*, one of the finest of all 17th-century cantatas.

The work is based on an anonymous 16th-century chorale melody, and Buxtehude sets all three verses with poignant imagination. Penned by Martin Schalling, the hymn's words express characteristic Lutheran devotional sentiments of mystical love for God and a personal, intimate connection with Jesus. In the first verse the sopranos section sings the unembellished chorale melody alongside independent, distinctive string counterpoint. The second verse introduces five solo voices, with the full choir punctuating conclusive moments. The texts of these first and second verses taken together outline the Great Commandment (Mark 12:28–31; Matthew 22:35–40), which forms the core of Christianity: love of God is equal to love of one's neighbor. The remarkable third verse contains moments that have captured the attention and imagination of audiences since Buxtehude's time: fluttering string tremolos which depict the wings of angels, and absolute stillness on the word *ruhn* (rest). This last verse is a *Sterbelied* (song for the dying) which dictates the Lutheran doctrine about the stages of transition after death. The final moments of this verse, and the concluding *Amen* joyfully intensify the sentiment, aligning with another aspect of Lutheran theology: that death is not an end, but a welcome passage into heaven.

*Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr.  
Ich bitt, wollst sein von mir nicht fern  
Mit deiner Hülff und Gnaden.  
Die ganze Welt erfreut mich nicht,  
Nach Himmel und Erd frag ich nicht,  
Wenn ich dich nur, Herr, habe.  
Und wenn mir gleich mein Herz zerbricht,  
So bist du doch mein Zuversicht,  
Mein Teil und meines Herzens Trost,  
Der mich durch sein Blut hat erlöst.  
Herr Jesu Christ, mein Gott und Herr,  
In Schanden laß mich nimmermehr!*

*Es ist ja, Herr, dein Geschenk und Gab,  
mein Leib und Seel und was ich hab  
in diesem armen Leben,*

I love you tenderly, O Lord.  
I pray, be not far from me  
With thy help and grace.  
The whole world does not delight me,  
I do not ask for heaven or earth,  
If I can only have you.  
And even if my heart should break,  
Yet you are still my confidence,  
My portion and my heart's comfort,  
Who has redeemed me through his blood.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my God and Lord,  
Let me never more be put to shame!

It is indeed, Lord, your gift and present,  
My body and soul and what I have  
In this poor life,

*damit ichs brauch zum Lobe dein,  
zu Nutz und Dienst des Nächsten mein,  
wollst mir dein Gnade geben.  
Behüt mich, Herr, vor falscher Lehr,  
des Satans Mord und Lügen wehr,  
in allem Kreuz erhalte mich,  
auf daß ichs trag geduldiglich.  
Herr Jesu Christ, mein Herr und Gott,  
tröst mir mein Seel in Todesnot.*

*Ach, Herr, laß dein lieb Engelein  
Am letzten End die Seele mein  
Im Abrahams Schoß tragen,  
Den Leib in seinm Schlafkämmerlein  
Gar sanft ohn einig Qual und Pein  
Ruhn bis am jüngsten Tage!  
Alsdann vom Tod erwecke mich,  
Daß meine Augen sehen dich  
In aller Freud, o Gottes Sohn,  
Mein Heiland und mein Gnadenthron!  
Herr Jesu Christ, erhöre mich,  
Ich will dich preisen ewiglich!*

– "Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr"  
(1569) by Martin Schalling.

Therefore I must use them to your praise,  
In service and use to my neighbor,  
So that you will grant me grace.  
Protect me, Lord, from false teachings,  
From Satan's death and lies forfend,  
In all adversity sustain me,  
So that I may bear it patiently.  
Lord Jesus Christ, my Lord and God,  
Comfort me in my dying agony.

Ah, Lord, let your dear little angel,  
at my final end, take my soul  
to Abraham's bosom.  
Let my body, in its little sleeping chamber,  
absolutely softly, without any anguish or pain,  
rest until the last day!  
At that day wake me from death,  
so that my eyes may see you  
in all joy, O Son of God,  
my Savior and Throne of grace!  
Lord Jesus Christ, hear me,  
I will praise you eternally!

– translation © Pamela Dellal,  
Emmanuel Music.

## **Ne irascaris Domine – Civitas sancti tui**

music by William Byrd (1540–1623)

text from the book of Isaiah

*a note from the conductor:*

The music of the English Renaissance composer William Byrd is full of extra-musical subtext. Byrd's 16th-century England was a time of dramatic religious upheaval, with violent swings between Protestantism and Catholicism. In this environment, Byrd, a devout Catholic, shrewdly navigated diplomatic relationships at the highest levels of court and royal life, writing both English church music for official, public use in the Anglican Church, and Latin church music for private, domestic Catholic settings. His renown as a composer likely saved him from punishment, torture, and death. In this context, the motet "Ne irascaris Domine – Civitas sancti tui" from *Cantiones sacrae* (Sacred Songs, 1589) is music with double meanings. The text is from the book of Isaiah, an Old Testament prophecy of the captive Israelites' Babylonian exile. Much like music from other eras of societal oppression (for instance, spirituals in the context of our own country's history of slavery), different meanings are heard by different listeners. For 16th-century Catholics, the biblical account would be heard alongside Byrd's own despair over the state of English Catholicism.

## *Ne irascaris Domine* (cont.)

This is a double motet composed with two symmetrical parts. Part 1 begins with pleading entries from low to high, cresting into a dramatic expression of abandonment on *ecce* (behold). Part 2 wanders statically around the word *deserta* (deserted), only to be interrupted by two mournful pronouncements of Zion's ruin. The heart of the music – in both parts of the motet – lies in the extended concluding sections. The repetition of *populus tuus omnes nos* (we are all your people) and the lament for Jerusalem, both expressed in imitative polyphony, would have been heard by Byrd's contemporaries as an elegy for an abandoned, desolated Catholic England. We may also hear it with contemporary ears as a heart-wrenching reminiscence on a lost general sense of community and homeland, and a longing for reconciliation.

*Ne irascaris, Domine, satis,  
et ne ultra memineris iniquitatis nostrae.  
Ecce, respice, populus tuus omnes nos.*

*Civitas sancti tui facta est deserta.  
Sion deserta facta est, Jerusalem desolata est.*

Do not be angry beyond measure, Lord;  
do not remember our sins forever.  
Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people.

Your sacred cities have become a wasteland;  
even Zion is a wasteland, Jerusalem a desolation.

– Isaiah 64:9-10, New International Version.

## **where you go**

music and text by David Lang (b. 1957), after the book of Ruth

*a note from the conductor:*

David Lang describes *where you go* as “a rewriting of what I remember [from] my favorite part of the biblical Book of Ruth.” Lang’s choral compositions are often based on “rewritings.” His creative process involves assembling text based on paraphrased retellings, and in this instance, the subtle distillation and repetition captures the profound simplicity in the statement of love and commitment expressed by Ruth.

A member of the Yale School of Music faculty in music composition and co-founder of the vanguard new music collective Bang on a Can, Lang’s musical style can be understood in the lineage of American Minimalism. He continues his description of *where you go* clarifying the misremembered inspiration: “I always forget that the book is mostly a series of legal arguments, about how someone claims land, or an inheritance, or a wife, or a family. Ruth’s simple desire to follow her heart sets in motion an examination of a complicated chain of interlocking obligations and overlapping responsibilities. That pretty much describes my piece as well.” *where you go* ends with a hauntingly beautiful chorale, from which individual voices emerge and mingle in soaring, melancholic counterpoint.



where you go  
where you stay  
where you live  
where you die

don't make me leave you  
don't make me turn away from you  
don't make me go

where you go I will go  
where you stay I will stay  
where you live I will live  
where you die I will die

don't make me leave you  
I will never leave you  
don't make me turn away from you  
I will never turn away from you  
don't make me go  
I will never go

– paraphrase of Ruth 1:16-17.

### **“Conversation in the mountains” from *Where flames a word***

music by Kile Smith (b. 1956)

text by Paul Celan (1920–1970)

*a note from the conductor:*

For the poet Paul Celan, language was everything. Born to a Yiddish-speaking Romanian family, Celan spent his life writing and translating literature, often from other languages into German. Even after his parents died in Nazi camps, he continued to write in the language of his oppressors. Referring to the Holocaust, he said: “In spite of everything, [language] remained secure against loss. But it had to go through its own lack of answers, through terrifying silence, through the thousand darknesses of murderous speech.”

Kile Smith's *Where flames a word* was commissioned by The Crossing and sets the translated prose of Paul Celan. While at first glance, the narrative of its middle movement “Conversation in the mountains” seems to be a meditation on our desire to connect with nature or each other, it is so much more. After a brief back and forth, the words tumble forth, cascading one after another in a continuous sentence. It is the most expressive musical setting of the word “and” of which I am aware, and Smith sets this word with explosive tension until it overflows in an epic sonic wave. The inverse happens later in the piece, when listening takes over, and one seems to wait for a reply from the mountain itself. Celan's words disarm our very understanding of language. They are words which Smith describes as “empty but filled with the meaning of humanity.”

*Conversation in the mountains (cont.)*

[The stones, too, were silent.]

And it was quiet in the mountains where they walked, one and the other.

"You've come a long way, have come all the way here..."

"I have. I've come, like you."

"I know."

"You know. You know and see: The earth folded up here, folded once and twice and three times, and opened up in the middle, and in the middle there is water, and the water is green, and the green is white, and the white comes from even farther up, from the glaciers, and one could say, but one shouldn't, that this is the language that counts here, the green with the white in it, a language not for you and not for me-because, I ask you, for whom is it meant, the earth, not for you, I say, is it meant, and not for me-a language, well, without I and without You nothing but He, nothing but It, you understand, and She, nothing but that."

"I understand, I do. After all, I've come a long way, I've come like you."

"I know."

– Paul Celan, *Collected Prose*, translation from the German by Rosmarie Waldrop, The Sheep Meadow Press, Riverdale-on-Hudson, NY. Translation © 1986 by Rosmarie Waldrop. Used by permission. Bracketed text omitted by the composer.

## **SHIFT**

music and text by Ayanna Woods (b. 1992)

*a note from the conductor:*

"Shift" was originally premiered on film, in the heart of the pandemic, for The Crossing's election project *The Crossing Votes: 2020*. It was captured outdoors with amplified singers standing 30 feet apart, creating a "monument" of sorts. Afterwards Ayanna Woods was asked to expand the single movement into a multi-movement work. "Bound," the third movement of the new, larger *SHIFT*, was premiered the following summer on a high alpine meadow above the Gallatin River in Montana. Both relied on Echoes Amplification Kits – The Crossing's response to the limitations brought about by the COVID pandemic – which facilitated outdoor, distanced singing.

At that time in the Summer of 2020, the political discourse was focused on public monuments to the Confederacy. In "Shift," the self-written text by Woods, a Yale College graduate and former member of the Yale Glee Club, criticizes a rigid understanding of our past, and asks us to continually reimagine a national self-image. A musical transformation reinforces the poetic sentiment, turning hard, block-like textures into malleable, porous harmonies. "Bound," a luminous evocation of ancestors, emerges from the foggy sound world of pre-recorded voices. After a reflective introduction, a propulsive ostinato ushers

in an insistent energy – a demand – which drives forward into a commanding, hopeful coda. It proclaims our interconnectedness, and reveals our shared responsibility towards one another: that we are called to shape the world with the same tender care given to us by others.

## 2. Shift

Why do we build monuments in stone?

Stone is brittle. When it cracks, it cuts to your churning core, America.

Tectonic plates collide; you shift in your seat.

I want a monument we imagine and reimagine and reimagine—

A monument we grasp and heave and pull in a long arc

bursting through the cracks in the story you tell, America.

## 3. Bound

*“You have to act as if it were possible to radically transform the world.*

*And you have to do it all the time.”*

– Angela Davis

*“Power. Transformation. Miracles. I want it. I need it. I gots to have it. Right Now!”*

– a Black Liberation chant, as taught by Dream Defenders

for my grandmother

for my grandmother’s hands

for the work of her hands

for her loving labor

for my grandfather

for my grandfather’s feet

for the pounding of his feet

for his loving labor

for the transformation

their loving labor

built we inhabit

a transformation

we are bound

right now

with our hands

with the work of our hands

with our feet

with the pounding of our feet

Right Now!

## Acknowledgements

It takes a large and generous community to make a DMA recital happen.

I wish to publicly express gratitude:

...to the singers and players whose artistry you hear today. A conductor doesn't make sound by themselves, and it is a deep joy and honor to stand in front of friends throughout this entire recital journey. *"Everybody has a song which is no song at all, it is a process of singing;"*

...to the conducting professors at Yale, for wisdom and attention to detail: Dr. Jeffrey Douma, Stefan Parkman, and Dr. Felicia Barber;

...to Ted, David, Kile, and Ayanna, for friendship and collaboration, and for fearlessly writing music of beauty and thought-provoking originality;

...for colleagues in the choral conducting studio, sharing encouragement, inspiration, and camaraderie: Grace, Brian, Reid, Anthony, Caspar, and Hyunju;

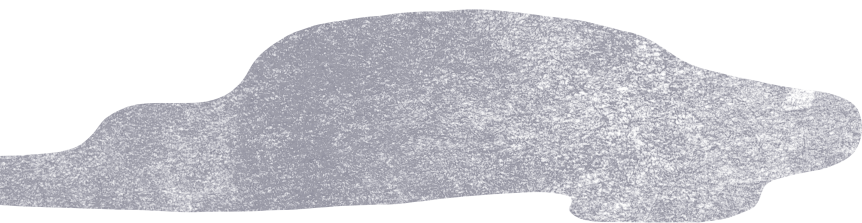
...to all who traveled to be here today. For family from Chicago and for The Crossing community in Philadelphia, shaping me into the artist and citizen I am today;

...for the production and office staff at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music and the leadership of Marquand Chapel who make an event like this logistically possible: Aric, Teo, Sachin, Don, Jeff, Liz, Sean, and Dean Awet;

...to Brittany, for making a life and a home with me in Wooster Square

...Thank you







*I understand, I do.  
After all, I've come a long way,  
I've come like you*

