

YALE REPERTORY CHORUS

Grace Currie
Reid Simmons
Anthony Washington
Brian De Stefano
CONDUCTORS

April 6, 2026

5:00 pm

Battell Chapel

New Haven

PROGRAM

I – WHAT THE SOUL KNOWS

Grace Currie *Conductor*

My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord

Traditional African American Spiritual
arr. Moses Hogan (1957–2003)

In the Lord, in the Lord,
My soul's been anchored in the Lord;
In the Lord, in the Lord
My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

Before I'd stay in hell one day,
My soul's been anchored in the Lord;
I'd sing and pray myself away,
My soul's been anchored in the Lord, my Lord!
My soul's been anchored in the Lord, good Lord!
My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

(continues on next page)

Please silence all mobile devices.

The use of photographic, recording, or electronic equipment during the performance is prohibited.

Your courtesy is appreciated.

Goin' shout and pray and never stop,
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord;
 Until I reach the mountain top,
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord, my Lord!
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord, good Lord!
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

Do you love Him? Oh yes!
 Do you love Him? Hallelujah!
 God almighty.

Are you anchored? Oh yes!
 Yes, I'm anchored,
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

Yes, will you serve Him? Oh yes!
 Will you serve Him? Hallelujah!
 God almighty.

Are you anchored? Oh yes!
 Yes, I'm anchored,
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

Hallelujah! Will you praise Him? Oh yes!
 Will you praise Him? Hallelujah!
 God almighty.
 Are you anchored? Yes I'm anchored.
 Lord, I'm anchored.

Lord, I love you. Oh yes!
 Yes, I'll serve you. Oh yes!
 Lord, I'll praise you. Oh yes!
 Hallelujah!

My soul's been anchored in the Lord,
 God almighty,
 My soul's been anchored in the Lord.

(Traditional African American Spiritual)

In the End

Daniel Currie
 (b. 2005)

And in the end
 I will seek you
 Out amongst
 The stars.

The space dust
 Of me will
 Whisper
 'I love you'.

Into the infinity
 Of the universe

(From "Love and Space Dust" by David Jones, b. 1989)

The Hope of Loving (movements I, II, VI)

Jake Runestad (b. 1986)

I. Yield to Love *(Rabia, c. 717–801)*

I know about love the way the fields know about light,
 the way the forest shelters us.
 We are vulnerable like an infant.
 We need each other's care or we will suffer.
 How will you ever find peace unless you yield to love?

II. Wild Forces *(St. Francis of Assisi, c. 1181–1226)*

There are beautiful, wild forces within us.
 Let them turn millstones inside
 filling bushels that reach to the sky.

VI. The Hope of Loving *(Meister Eckhart, c. 1260–1328)*

What keeps us alive, what allows us to endure?
 It is the hope of loving, of being loved.
 We weep when light does not reach our hearts.
 We wither like fields if someone close
 does not rain their kindness upon us.
 My soul has a purpose, it is to love.

(trans. Daniel Ladinsky, b. 1948)

II

Reid Simmons *Conductor*

Herr nun lässest du deinen Diener Heinrich Schütz (1585–1672)

CHOIR 1

Lord, now let you go your servant in peace
 as you have said,
 for my eyes have seen the Saviour
 whom you have prepared for all nations
 as a light to enlighten all gentiles
 and as a glory for your people Israel.

(Luke 2:29–32)

CHOIR 2

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord,
 they have rest after their works,
 and their works will follow them.
 They are in hands of the Lord
 and there is no sorrow that them disturb.

(Revelation 14:13)

Abendlied

Joseph Rheinberger
 (1839–1901)

Stay with us, for it is almost evening,
 and the day is now far spent.

(Luke 24:29)

Jesu Meine Freude Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
(1809–1847)

Jesus, my joy,
pasture of my heart,
Jesus, my desire,
ah how long, how long
is my heart filled with anxiety
and longing for you!
Lamb of God, my bridegroom,
apart from you on the earth
there is nothing dearer to me.

(Johann Franck, 1618–1677)

III — WHY ARE WE HERE?

Anthony Washington *Conductor*

Though the great Waters sleep Isaac Lovdahl
(b. 1993)

Though the great Waters sleep,
That they are still the Deep,
We cannot doubt—
No vacillating God
Ignited this Abode
To put it out—

(Emily Dickinson, 1830–1886)

You Through Me Alex Berko
(b. 1995)

I look on as you walk through me
You are my memory, my spine,
Etched in these slabs of stone,
These vines of tangled years,

I've filled the branches of my trees with every phrase you
wanted me to hear
Like lyrics for the city birds to sing—
The unsent letters you have
Folded in your sleeves

Dusk arrives to call you home
Evasive as light, as hours
We must spend apart, colors
Of these walls turned grey till dawn

And time and time in time again
I'll wind up carried by your shoes
Along to where you land.

And time and time in time again
Each time the rain keeps you away
It's you I wish it were instead

Where will you go, you've always come to me,
Where will you come to rest your weary eyes,
To set your heavy sorrows in the soft helm of my soil,
To let the weather water them to bloom

If I am formed into another frame
Leaves to brick and soil to stone
A place to rest, a place to call your home
Then I will surely never be alone

Come back to me just as you are
To sleep within your quiet room
To love and grieve and take the time you need
For who knows what tomorrow brings

Rest easy, you can always come to me
And dry off from the storm under the eaves
Take all that I can give, there is no end
To time with you if there is time again,

Time and time in time again.

Whether I am green or slate
It's you I wish would stay to rest
Here in my bracing arms

(Rūta Kuzmickas, b. 1994; Alex Berko, b. 1995)

IV — I KNOW/I BELIEVE

Brian De Stefano *Conductor*

I know that my redeemer liveth Cecilia McDowall
(b. 1951)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at
the latter day upon the earth: And though worms destroy
this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ
risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that
sleep. I know that my redeemer liveth, I know.

(Job 19:25–26; 1 Corinthians 15:20)

Credo, ZWV 31 Jan Dismas Zelenka
(1679–1745)

Elijah McCormack *soprano*
Amanda Sidebottom *alto*
Will Doreza *tenor*
Matthew Dexter *bass*

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(The Nicene Creed)

YALE REPERTORY CHORUS

Soprano

Miriam Levenson
Hyunju Yang
Sophie Dvorak
JoEllen West
Tawnie Olson
Katherine Johnson
Emily D'Souza
Manon Gilles
Xenya Currie

Alto

Grace Currie
Annabelle Clawson
Melissa Brassard
Nataly Pak
Sophia Spiegel
Anna Zoltowski
Thisbe Wu
Logan Gilbert
Alexis Mburu

Tenor

Jack Purdue
Dylan Shumway
Kevin Vondrak
Caspar Wein
Noah Stein
David Liebowitz
Scott Romeyn
Brian De Stefano

Bass

Reid Simmons
Will Doreza
David Rice
Anthony Washington
Jacob Gruss
Fredy Bonilla
Rory Latham
Terence Wu
Haniel Neves

Anne Maria Lim *Staff Accompanist*

INSTRUMENTALISTS

Caroline Smoak *violin*
Sumin Cho *violin*
Craig Kirkland *viola*
Dylan Kinneavy *cello*
Anne Maria Lim *organ*

Grace Currie – What the Soul Knows

Our program tonight begins by examining what is deeply within all of us – what our soul truly knows. Despite the noise, hardships, and uncertainties of life, who are we at our core, and what is our purpose in this short time we exist on earth?

We begin with a declaration of trust in our creator: *My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord*, a traditional African American spiritual arranged by Moses Hogan. The text draws from Hebrews 6:19: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” This song likely emerged in the 18th or 19th century among enslaved Americans and was sung both as worship and as a means of survival. Spirituals often carried layered emotional and spiritual meaning, and in this case, being “anchored in the Lord” meant: my identity cannot be taken, my hope is secure despite suffering, and my God is a source of stability in a violent, unstable world.

Moses Hogan, known for elevating the spiritual in concert choral settings while preserving its emotional and cultural core, brings this song to life for the stage. This spiritual endures because it speaks to a universal human experience: anchoring ourselves in something greater than we are – whether God, another deity, or the universe – especially when life feels uncertain and difficult.

We move from the soul anchored in a higher power to the relationship of one soul to another in Daniel Currie's *In the End*. Composed when Currie was just 18 years old, this piece explores the juxtaposition between the vastness of space and the intimate connection between two people. The text comes from David Jones' *Love and Space Dust*:

And in the end
I will seek you
Out amongst
The stars.

The space dust
Of me will
Whisper
'I love you'

Into the infinity
Of the universe.

In this setting, non-chord tones portray the lush variety of colors in the universe. At the piece's climax, a hesitant, quiet phrase reflects the vulnerability of saying “I love you,” immediately followed by a powerful moment of expansive tonality, capturing the simultaneous joy and fear of hearing those words in return. The sliding sonorities in the final phrase, “the universe,” evoke megalophobia: the unsettling feeling of something vast coming too close, as if Jupiter were passing right overhead.

At its core, Currie's idea is that two souls remain forever connected, whether in human form or beyond. As he describes it: “I'm always going to find you, regardless of how scared I am of death and the vastness of the universe. I'm going to find you as long as I keep existing, because I am forever tied to you. It's like throwing away everything you've ever known and saying it's me and this person.” Programming my brother's piece is truly a delight, especially this one, as we are both astronomy nerds and talk about quantum entanglement (particles that act as a single, unified entity even when physically separated) more frequently than what is considered normal. He is a thoughtful, creative, and curious person whom I deeply admire, and it's an honor to bring his piece to life with the Yale Repertory Chorus.

After seeking solace in God and acknowledging the vastness of the universe, we return to earth with a thesis on what the soul knows in Jake Runestad's *The Hope of Loving*. The texts of movements I, II, and VI come from the mystics Rabia, St. Francis of Assisi, and Meister Eckhart, tracing a journey from surrender, to participation, to purpose.

The piece opens with Rabia's text, "Yield to Love":

I know about love the way the fields know about life,
the way the forest shelters us,

likening the act of receiving love to the natural forces of the earth. She suggests that love requires exposure, dependence, and trust. Love is not romanticized—it is necessary for survival: "we need each other's care or we will suffer." Runestad implements quartal melodies here, suggesting an openness like that of a wide field or vast forest.

The second movement, "Wild Forces," celebrates the untamed, God-given energy within the human soul. The text calls us not to suppress this energy, but to let it work within us. Runestad reflects this through rhythmic drive and circular motion, suggesting forces that are active, generative, and transformative. The result of this inner work is outward abundance.

The final, titular movement, "The Hope of Loving," serves as the thesis of this section of the program. As in Rabia's text, love is essential, but here there is an added emphasis on mutuality. It is not enough to be loved; we must also love others. Runestad answers the quartal melodies of the first movement with quartal harmonies in this homophonic text:

What keeps us alive, what allows us to endure?
It is the hope of loving, of being loved.

The piece ends with a quiet revelation:

My soul has a purpose,
it is to love.

Here, love becomes a form of spiritual sustenance—not only romantic love, but a broader love shared with people, animals, and the earth itself. It is this love that keeps the soul alive—the thread that anchors us in God, binds us to one another, and echoes through the fields of the earth and into the vastness of the universe.

Reid Simmons

Heinrich Schütz's (1585–1672) setting of *Herr, nun lässest du deinen Diener* from *Musikalische Exequien* is a reflective and intimate use of the Nunc dimittis. *Musikalische Exequien* was specifically composed for the funeral of Heinrich Posthumus Reuß, who selected the texts that would be used for his burial. These texts come from the Luther Bible in passages Luke 2:29–32 (The Nunc dimittis sung by the large choir) and Revelation 14:13 "Selig sind die Toten" (blessed are the dead, sung by the trio). Scored for double choir, Schütz masterfully interweaves theology, text, texture, and harmony through striking musical moments. The antiphonal writing allows for a dialogue between Earth and the celestial. Through Schütz's writing, the listener will notice many moments of tension that seem to effortlessly flow out of one another leading to a gentle, yet remarkable end.

As a strong part of the choral canon, Rheinberger's (1839–1901) *Abendlied* continues to display the beauty of German text and composition. This piece is known for its repeated plea "Bleib bei uns" (Stay with us) that evokes the atmosphere of evening prayer with warmth and clarity. Rheinberger's writing achieves a delicate balance between homophonic textures and subtle inner motion, allowing the choir to maintain the overall atmosphere without losing forward momentum. The final iteration of "Bleib bei uns" broadens both harmonically and rhythmically, giving the effect of stillness. In this moment, a sense of intimate authenticity is discovered. The mood shifts from a sense of pleading to meditation that fades into still, quiet hope.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847) was a prominent German composer, conductor, and performer. He was the grandson of a famous Jewish philosopher named Moses Mendelssohn. Despite his grandfather's beliefs about the assimilation of Judaism and German culture, Mendelssohn's Father converted their family to Lutheran and adopted the surname name Bartholdy. Having been composed in 1828, *Jesu meine Freude* was completed by a teenaged Mendelssohn. This piece strives to be rooted in contrapuntal clarity, yet expands into more romantic

tendencies that one may expect from Mendelssohn's compositions. In the setting, Mendelssohn brings that past to life while also displaying his own, young personal compositional styles that create interesting musical moments for the performers and listeners alike.

Anthony Washington – Why are we Here?

The penultimate portion of tonight's program grapples with an ever-present question: Why are we Here? Beginning with Isaac Lovdahl's *Though the great Waters sleep*, we attempt to address the "why" – what is our purpose on this Earth? While the answer to this question remains elusive, Emily Dickinson's poetry offers a comforting sentiment, suggesting that "No vacillating God / Ignited this Abode / To put it out." Though we may not understand our purpose in being here, surely God was intentional in our creation. Lovdahl interweaves musical quotations of the funeral hymn *Abide with Me*, seemingly entreating God to remain alongside us throughout this lifetime, regardless of our anxieties about the unknown. Selected as the winner of the 2021 Yale Glee Club Emerging Composers Contest, Lovdahl ultimately asserts: "We are here – we exist. Our meaning is found in our living and our striving. You have a purpose – known or unknown; bestowed, discovered, or invented."

We then move directly into Alex Berko's *You Through Me* in an attempt to address the "here" – what is this world that we inhabit, and how is it connected to us? In 2021, New York City officials announced a plan to destroy the beloved Elizabeth Street Garden in SoHo, New York, in order to build affordable housing in its place. With over 125,000 annual visitors, the site had long served as a pillar of community, even as the proposed development pursued a worthy cause. Commissioned by Conspirare and Craig Hella Johnson in 2022, Rūta Kuzmickas and Berko's text offers the perspective of the garden itself, ruminating on the ways we move through physical spaces and impress upon them our own emotions and experiences. The personified garden provides a sobering reminder that our memories remain embedded in the spaces we inhabit – recontextualized, perhaps, but present nonetheless:

If I am formed into another frame
Leaves to brick and soil to stone
A place to rest, a place to call your home
Then I will surely never be alone

Come back to me just as you are
To sleep within your quiet room
To love and grieve and take the time you need
For who knows what tomorrow brings

While we may not be able to articulate our ultimate purpose for existence, our unique relationship with the world around us may suggest something of why we are here. If Lovdahl posits that purpose is discovered in the act of living and striving, Berko's work reminds us that our lives leave quiet imprints on the places we inhabit. Together, they suggest that our purpose may lie in this exchange between ourselves and the world: to live fully, bearing in mind the sanctity of the spaces with which we engage.

Brian De Stefano – I know/I believe

The final portion of this program is based on the first words from two different pieces: "I know" and "Credo" (I believe). This music is concerned with elements of faith- knowledge of redemption through ultimate distress and destruction, followed by Western Christianity's most important affirmation of faith. What we put our faith in ultimately defines who we are, and while these pieces are especially focused on Christianity, the lesson of the texts to remain steadfast in our faith holds true by any means.

Cecilia McDowall's *I know that my redeemer liveth* shares identical text from the famous soprano aria found in Georg Friedrich Handel's *Messiah*. The titular passage from the Book of Job is juxtaposed with a passage from Corinthians, interpolating the risen Christ with Job's belief in God in the midst of strife. McDowall's

piece was commissioned by the Epsom Choral Society to be performed along Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*. The first performance of Brahms Requiem in 1868 included a performance of Handel's famous aria (hence McDowall's choice to compose a new setting of its text). This added a Christological element to the Requiem, which the agnostic Brahms intentionally left out of the piece. McDowall uses high-voiced cluster chords to evoke a sense of ethereality, employing frequent divisi in the higher voices throughout the anthem.

Jan Dismas Zelenka was a Bohemian, late-baroque contemporary of Bach and Handel, who largely faded into obscurity until the end of the 19th century. Zelenka was employed at the Court of Dresden where he played bass, occasionally conducted the orchestra and choir, and wrote music for the church. While he unfortunately was never hired as the official Kapellmeister at Dresden, he nonetheless was responsible for a significant amount of music for the church's Catholic liturgy. As a result, Zelenka was a prolific composer of settings of the Mass ordinary. This setting of the **Credo** was composed to complete a Kyrie-Gloria mass by Italian composer Antonio Caldara, *Missa Providentiae*, probably for use for a Mass celebrated on a feast day in Dresden. Zelenka also composed a *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* based on Caldara's material, but the *Credo* is entirely his own (in fact, Zelenka borrowed music for the final two movements from the last movements of his *Miserere*, ZWV 56). Zelenka's wildly vivid, chromatic melodic and harmonic language is on full display in this setting of Christianity's statement of belief. Zelenka pays special attention to the depiction of the life of Christ in the creed, with the strings seeming to mimic the sound of Jesus' walk to the cross in the "Crucifixus", while the strings play wild sixteenth notes in unison during his resurrection. Zelenka ends the *Credo* with perhaps one of his most innovative double fugues, using an entirely chromatic subject, and then sounding it again backwards.

Grace Currie is a conductor and arts entrepreneur from Aurora, Illinois, pursuing a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music. She serves as Assistant Conductor of the Marquand Chapel Choir and sings in Yale Schola Cantorum, among other ensembles. Currie is also a student reporter for the Institute of Sacred Music and contributes to the University's performance and publicity efforts. She is the co-founder and Executive Director of City of Lights Theatre & Cabaret in Aurora, where she has produced more than a dozen cabarets and served as assistant director for the organization's inaugural full-scale musical, *Pippin*, in 2025. Currie previously taught choral music for four years at West Aurora High School and LaSalle-Peru High School, directing curricular choirs and a *cappella* groups, and teaching AP Music Theory. A graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she earned a Bachelor of Music degree in choral music education with highest honors in 2018. Her professional background also includes client marketing at Nuveen Asset Management in Chicago, Illinois, and teaching at Paramount School of the Arts in Aurora. Through her work, Currie integrates choral conducting, organizational leadership, and innovative approaches to community engagement in music.

Brian De Stefano is a baritone and conductor, currently in their first year studying for their Master of Music degree in choral conducting at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music. De Stefano holds bachelor's degrees in music education and vocal performance from the University of North Texas. While there, De Stefano sang with the A Cappella Choir, the school's flagship choral ensemble. They served as a staff singer at the Church of the Incarnation in Dallas. Additionally, while in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, De Stefano sang professionally with Incarnatus, Verdigris Ensemble, and the Saint Michael and All Angels Compline Choir. As conductor, De Stefano was selected for the 2024 Southwestern ACDA undergraduate conducting masterclass, and the 2025 Texas Choral Directors Association conducting masterclass.

Reid Simmons is in his first year of the Master of Music program in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music. He is an assistant conductor of Yale Camerata as well as Minister of Music at Trinity Lutheran Church of Milford, CT. A native of Pennsylvania, Simmons holds dual Bachelor of Music degrees in Music Education and Organ Performance from West Chester University. He earned numerous

honors including the Lois Williams Concert Choir Award and the Outstanding Teacher Education Senior Award. Before moving to New Haven, Simmons served as the Director of Music at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Wallingford, PA. There, he led worship through choral, organ, and vocal music, produced seasonal choral-orchestral concerts, and founded the Love Concert, an annual event supporting LGBTQIA+ social justice through regional choral collaboration. In spring of 2025, Simmons conducted choirs, instructed music theory, and taught in the Music Lab at Twin Valley High School in Elverson, PA. As a teacher, he is well known for his undying energy and passion for helping students discover their love for music making. Simmons has performed as a chorister, organist, trumpeter, and vocal soloist across the U.S., Europe, and South Korea.

Anthony Washington is a baritone and choral conductor currently pursuing a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting at the Yale School of Music and Institute of Sacred Music where he serves as an Assistant Conductor of the Yale Camerata. At Yale, he studies with Grete Pedersen, Jeffery Douma, and Stefan Parkman. Washington has appeared as a conducting fellow in numerous choral festivals, among them the Sarteano Choral Workshop in Italy and the Choral Masterworks Institute at the Eastman School of Music. In 2025, he served as the conducting apprentice for the Berkshire Choral International program in Berlin, Germany under Dr. Marie Bucoy-Calavan. In workshops and masterclasses across the United States and internationally, Washington has worked with renowned conductors including Simon Carrington, Jerry Blackstone, and Anthony Trecek-King, and conducted leading ensembles including Cantus and Voices. Washington graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in Music and Anthropology from Cornell University. While at Cornell, he was named a Merrill Presidential Scholar, inducted into the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society, and served as a research fellow for the Lisette Project as a Nexus Scholar. Along with these honors, Washington was awarded both the Barbara Troxell Vocal Award and the John James Blackmore Scholarship for his contributions to the Cornell voice and organ programs, respectively.

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