

YALE INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC PRESENTS

YALE CAMERATA

DR. FELICIA BARBER, CONDUCTOR

An American Songbook

APRIL 12, 2026

4:00 PM

WOOLSEY HALL

NEW HAVEN



AMERICAN ART THROUGH PICTURES

An American Song Book Presents “American Art through Pictures.”



This virtual exhibition, featuring a collection of works by artist Dr. Imo Nse Imeh, is a collaboration between Dr. Imo Nse Imeh, Dr. Felicia Barber, and the Yale Camerata choral ensemble. This collaboration explores themes that define the “American Experience” as depicted through art and music.

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Yale INSTITUTE OF SACRED MUSIC

YALE CAMERATA

An American Songbook

DR. FELICIA BARBER, CONDUCTOR

Praise the Lord

Josh Liu *violin*

Stephanie Hug *violin*

Ellen Higham *viola*

Mariusz Skula *cello*

Florence Beatrice Price

(1887–1953)

Ave Maria

Brian De Stefano *baritone*

arr. R. Nathaniel Dett

(1882–1943)



Feeding the Veins of the Earth

Creation

William Billings

(1746–1800)

American Echoes:

How Long?

Columbia

Lindsay Elliott *tenor*

Troy D. Robertson

(b. 1978)



Hicks' Farewell

Forgotten Girl

Zuni Sunrise Song from *Native American Suite*

Brent Michael Davids
(b. 1959)

Reid Simmons *Conductor*



Butterfly Girl



Color Studies: Three Girls

Nyon Nyon

Jake Runestad
(b. 1986)

Anthony Washington *Conductor*

I, too

Derrick Roland Harmon *tenor*

Jungmin Youn *piano*

Undine Smith Moore
(1904–1989)



I



II



III



'And I'll Be There For You'



Frederick Douglass Portrait

INTERMISSION

WORLD PREMIERE COMMISSION

A Litany of Praise

Jeffery L. Ames

(b. 1969)

1. Joy

2. Assurance

Grace Currie *soprano*

Matthew Dexter *bass*

3. Celebration

The Chariot Jubilee

Albert R. Lee *tenor*

Dett



Goodbye Brother

A Celtic Blessing

Dave Riley

Praise the Lord

Praise the Lord, all ye nations,
Praise the Lord, all ye people.
Praise the Lord
For His merciful kindness is great toward us,
And the truth of the Lord endureth forever.
Praise the Lord.

(Psalm 117)

Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
Nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
Now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

(Traditional Prayer)

Creation

When I with pleasing wonder stand,
And all my frame survey,
Lord, 'tis thy work, I own thy hand,
Thus built my humble clay.
Our life contains a thousand springs,
And dies if one be gone.
Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long.

(Isaacs Watts, 1674–1748, Psalm 139, Part 2; and Hymn 19, Book 2)

American Echoes:

How Long?

How long? How long? How long?

How long, dear Savior,
Oh how long shall this bright hour,
Shall this bright hour delay?

Fly swift around ye wheels of time!
And bring the promised day!

His own soft hand shall wipe the tears,
Shall wipe the tears from ev'ry weeping eye.
And pains and groans and grief and fears
and death itself shall die.

(Isaacs Watts, 1674–1748)

Columbia

Thus down a lone valley with cedars o'er spread,
From the noise of town I pensively strayed,
The bloom from the face of fair heaven retired,
The winds ceas'd to murmur, the thunder expired.
Perfumes as of Eden flowed sweetly along,
A voice as of angels enchantingly sung,
Columbia! Columbia! To glory arise,
The queen of the world and the child of the skies.

(Timothy Dwight, 1752–1817)

Hicks' Farewell

The time is swiftly rolling on
When I must faint and die,
My body to the dust return
And forgotten lie.

Thro' heats and colds, I've often went,
And wander'd in darkest despair,
To call poor sinners to repent,
And seek the Saviour dear.

Oh my brother preachers, boldly speak,
And stand you on Zion's great wall,
To revive the strong, confirm the weak,
And after sinners call.

Oh Lord a father to them be,
And keep them from all harm,
That they may love and worship Thee
And dwell on Thy loving charms.

How often you look'd for me,
And often-times seen me come;
But now I depart from thee
and never return!

For I can never come to thee;
Let this not grieve your heart,
For you will shortly come to me
Where we shall never part.

(Reverend Berryman Hicks, 1778–1839)

Zuni Sunrise Song from Native American Suite

We-O-E

We Ta Ho Ta He

Ye Ta Ho

Mi A Ton A Lo

Wi Ye Ta Ho

Hi A Ton A Le

Hi Ya Ha A We

So Bee De Ta Le.

We Ta Ho Ta He. Mm.

We A O

We A O A

(Traditional Native American – Pueblo)

Nyon Nyon

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon!

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

(See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.)

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

See mahkah who wehn yah bah doo bee dah.

(Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.)

Nyon nyon nyon. Nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon. Nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon. Nyon nyon nyon.

Nyon nyon nyon!

Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ah sah! Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ah sah!

(We ow we ow. We ow we ow.)

(Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss)

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

(Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ah sah! Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ah sah!)

(Doom doom doom doom doom doom doom dooah doom)

(Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss)

Nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon nyon.

When yah ba doo bee dah.

(Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ahh sah! Ooit! *Pop* tihkah, ahh sah!)
(Doom doom doom doom doom da. Doo doo doom.)
(Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss)
wen ya ba do be da.

Weh nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!
Weh nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!
Weh nah nah nah nah nah nah nah!

Nyon nyon nyonb nyah nee oo ah!

Wehn wah wah now, wah now, wah, wah now wah now.
Wehn wah wah now, wah now, wah, wah now wah now.
(Wahoo, wahoo. Wahoo, wahoo.)
(Doo wee ah oo. Doo wee ah oo.)
(Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss Dnn tss)

Wehn wow wow wow wow wow wow wow wow wow.
Wahh!

(Jake Runestad, b. 1986)

I, too

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

(Langston Hughes, 1902–1967)

A Litany of Praise:

Joy

We praise Thee, O God!
Our Redeemer and King!
The Creator of glorious things.

Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te,
Glorificamus te!

In grateful devotion,
Our tribute we bring.
We come before You.
Bow and kneel before You.

O God, we adore You.
O God. Yes, you are God.
Holy, glorious, wonderful God!

Laudamus te.
Benedicimus te.
Adoramus te,
Glorificamus te!

We bless Your name,
We praise You, O God!
God our Redeemer and Creator.
We praise You, God!
We bless Your name!

(from 'We Praise You, O God' – Glenn Pease)

Assurance

Oh God, we praise Your name,
Ruler of the earth and sky;
We bow as we bless Your name,
Within our hearts we testify.

Not one promise unfulfilled
For You spoke, and we rely,
May Your name be lifted high
To Thee our King we glorify.

For Your word shall not be void,
But accomplish Your command.
And your promise shall be ever true.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place through all generations.
Before the mountains were formed,
before You gave birth to the world,
from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Through trials and tempest You have been our guide.
When perils tried to take us,
You did not forsake us.
From everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Not one promise has been failed;
in our weakness You prevailed.
Everything You spoke to us came to pass.
And from everlasting to everlasting, You are God!

All things are possible,
Being confident in You,
If we ask anything according to Your will;
You hear us; You hear us; You hear us; You hear us.

*(Original text by Felicia Barber, and scriptural references from
Joshua 21:45; Psalms 62:5, 90:2b; Matthew 19:26b; I John 5:14)*

Celebration

With voices united our praises we offer;
With voices united our praises we bring.
Here, I raise my Ebenezer.
By Thy help thus far we have come.
He to rescue me from danger interposed His precious blood,
We raise our songs of thanksgiving and praise.
To You our Great Redeemer be praise.
With You, Lord, beside us, Your strong arm will guide us. (Hallelujah!)
You, our Great Redeemer be praise.
To You, our Great Redeemer be praise! Amen!

(unknown and Jeffery L. Ames, b. 1969)

The Chariot Jubilee

Down from the heavens, a golden chariot swinging,
Comes God's promise of salvation.
Amen! Amen!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home,
Swing low, sweet chariot,
Coming for to carry me home!

God made a covenant,
For the glory of His grace
Through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
His gospel, flowing free,
Like a chariot swung from heav'n,
Shall bear the true believer home,
Safely home.

Salvation, sweet cov'nant of the Lord,
I shall ride up in that chariot in that morning.
Tell it, tell it!

He who doth in Christ believe,
Though he were dead,
Yet shall he live.
King Jesus triumphed o'er the grave!
His grace alone
Can sinners save!

O Hallelujah!

*(text by R. Nathaniel Dett based on Old/New Testament passages
and the African American Spiritual 'Swing Low Sweet Chariot')*

A Celtic Blessing

May the road rise to meet you;
May the wind be always at your back;
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
May the rain fall soft upon your fields;
And, until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

(anonymous)

YALE CAMERATA

Dr. Felicia Barber *Conductor*

Reid Simmons, Anthony Washington *Graduate Assistant Conductors*

Don Youngberg *Manager*

Jungmin Youn *Accompanist*

Soprano I

Jaminda Blackmon

Grace Currie

Kelsey Guinipero

Kristin Jensen

June McGrath Lanpher

Elizabeth Lee

Eizel Magno

Isabella Mariani

Rosalyn Ramos-Reyes

Elle Rothermich

Nicole Scout

Rebecca Stoll

Soprano II

Harriett Alfred

Kate Bobsein

Margaret Ewing

Daria Kerschenbaum

Han A Kim

Matiya Kouassi

Carolyn Ladd

Francesca Romani

Lauren Sar

Juliane Seling

Elizabeth Stassen

Valerie Trantum

Alto I

Emily Breeze
Joseline Buggie
Liese Franklin-Zitzkat
Lydia Grmai
Gabrielle Johnson
Halle Keane
Sylvia Lipnick
Anna Meglan
Nadia Okwuosa
Andrea Rivera-Luna
Heather Snell
Cecelia Tamburro
Mika Yamaguchi
Jungmin Youn

Alto II

Carey Bates
Sara Culver
Laura Discenza
Grecia Hernandez Hontz
Gloria McComas
Janet McCray
Gabriella Mendoza
Owen Messing
Katie Ream
Martha Kirk Swartz
Elianna Genevieve Tenace
Amber Woodward

Tenor I

Lindsay Elliott
Junjie Guo
Derrick Roland Harmon
Rowan Hebert
Dylan Shumway
Andrew Zager
Chao Zhang

Tenor II

Mars Arriesgado
Brian De Stefano
Emerson Fang
Josh Goodbaum
Hadi Houalla
Henry Liu
Brooks Low
Frank Parker
Al Powers
David Stein
Jason Zentz

Bass I

Tim Barringer
Michael Coderre
Donald Kohn
Michel Ledizet
Joon Lee
Graham Pelligra
Reid Simmons
Kevin Peiqi Wang
Anthony Washington

Bass II

Daniil Antonenko
Matthew Bogen
Richard He
Gerry Holmes
Thomas Hernandez Hontz
Hyunsung Lim
David Low
John Phelan
Miles Wilson-Toliver
Terence Wu

ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Josh Liu *concertmaster*

Jiwon Choi

Julimar Gonzalez

Hyein Koo

Eunbee Cho

Violin II

Stephanie Hug

Jimin Lee

Sofia Matthews

Sumin Cho

Caroline Smoak

Viola

Ellen Higham

Miranda Werner

Craig Kirkland

Gretchen Fraiser

Cello

Mariusz Skula

Michael Bridges

Ravenna Michalson

Bass

Arden Ingersoll

Kohei Yamaguchi

Flute

Kim Collins

Oboe

Gabriela Fry

Bassoon

Aaron Nealy

Horn

Esther Orlov-Mayer

Trumpet

Terri Rauschenbach

Ethan Wood

Trombone

Naomi Wharry

Tuba

Jengmin Wen

Timpani

Anna Mueller

Percussion

Aya Kaminaguchi

Piano

Jungmin Youn

Organ

Anne Maria Lim

Florence Price stands as a pioneering figure in American music history, celebrated as the first African American woman to have a symphony performed by a major orchestra. A classically trained musician, Price cultivated a compositional voice that fused European Romanticism with the melodic contours, rhythms, and expressive depth of the African American spiritual tradition. *Praise the Lord* draws its text from the complete 117th Psalm as found in the King James Bible – the shortest of the psalms, yet among the most universal in its call to praise. The year 2026 commemorates the 75th anniversary of the composition of this work, further underscoring its enduring significance within Price’s output. While originally composed for chorus and piano and/or organ, this setting has been adapted for string quartet by our conductor Dr. Barber, and it beautifully brings out the lyrical part writing of Price.

The composition, written in the form of a sacred anthem, is cast in a clear ternary form. The opening section is declamatory and emphatic, marked by rhythmic vitality and a strong sense of forward motion that underscores the psalm’s call to praise. This gives way to a contrasting middle section that is calmer and more reflective in character, with softened dynamics, more fluid phrasing, and a heightened sense of lyricism that invites a more introspective engagement with the text. The return of the opening material restores the initial energy, now often enriched through fuller textures and expanded harmonic color. In this final section, the music transforms the initial praise into a more emphatic and communal declaration. Throughout, Price demonstrates a masterful balance between structural clarity and expressive freedom, creating a work that is both formally satisfying and deeply moving.

R. Nathaniel Dett was an Afro-Canadian organist, poet, and composer whose output includes smaller and larger works for voice, chorus, and instruments. Born a generation removed from American slavery, he was among the first Black graduates of the Oberlin Conservatory. His formal training as a child—from being directed by his mother to committing the texts of Longfellow and Shakespeare to memory—to his matriculation to Oberlin—produced a unique blend of music resulting from lived and learned experiences. He developed the music program at the Hampton Institute (now University), studied at Fontainebleau with Nadia Boulanger, served as President of the National Association of Negro Musicians—America’s oldest organization dedicated to the study and performance of music by people of African descent—and was bestowed many honors throughout his life.

His compositional style was marked by the blending of Black folk melodies to European form. He composed anthems and motets using spiritual themes and wedded them to new sounds. His setting of *Ave Maria* is composed in the form of a motet with traditional Latin text. While through-composed, listeners will hear a rhythmic motif throughout, which includes a half note, followed by the dotted quarter, eighth, and two quarter notes, which points back to the initial text of prayer to Mary. The ending is marked by a baritone solo, intoned while the choir is sustaining supporting chords. The piece is both

liturgically and musically sound as a result. It is among Dett's more notable choral works and is known for its expressive writing, intentional harmonization and nod to his distinct musical training.

An original hymn tune by William Billings with text by Isaac Watts, *Creation* is a setting inspired by Psalm 139. This hymn, influenced by early shape note singing, can be found in his final collection, *The Continental Harmony*, published in 1794. The text explores the majesty of God and the awe of creation in two four-line stanzas. Centuries after Watts crafted this text, it was discovered that he in fact adapted the second stanza from Robert Boyle's *Occasional Reflections Upon Several Subjects*, which meditates on the resilience and complexity of the human body. In Billings's setting of this text, the voices are unaccompanied and open with strong, homophonic singing. The middle section is marked by a buoyant and flowing fugue, and the end of the hymn returns to the homophonic singing found in the beginning of this setting.

William Billings, an early member of the First New England School, is regarded as one of America's earliest choral composers. His entire output was almost exclusively for unaccompanied voices, and there are several anthologies with his hymns and anthems. He was a strong admirer of the poetry of Isaac Watts, and many of his compositions include his texts. Billings also composed some of his own texts and set scripture to music. Many of his books include introductions written by the composer himself, explaining rudimentary music theory to readers and offering clear guidance on the interpretation of his music. While his music was appreciated much throughout his lifetime, his name went into obscurity for many years after his death. A renewed interest in his music came in the late twentieth century and is once again regarded for his foundational work in creating the sound of early American music.

Troy Robertson's *American Echoes* is a vivid musical tapestry that reflects the breadth of the American experience, weaving together stylistic influences, historical resonances, and sonic imagery into a three-movement choral work. Each movement functions as a distinct "echo" of cultural memory, while the work invites listeners to consider how landscape, identity, and history reverberate across time.

The first movement, entitled *How Long?*, establishes the expansive sonic world of the piece. Broad, open harmonies and spacious textures evoke the physical vastness of the American musical landscape—reminiscent of the shape note singing in large part attributed to Billings's compositional language. Robertson often employs sustained chords and layered entrances to create a sense of sonic depth, as though voices are emerging from and receding into space. Rhythmic figures are grounded yet fluid, suggesting both stability and motion, and setting the stage for the journey that follows.

Columbia, the second movement offers a more intimate and reflective contrast. Here, Robertson turns inward, drawing on lyrical melodic writing and a more transparent choral

texture. Solo or semi-chorus passages may emerge, creating a sense of personal narrative within the larger collective voice. Harmonically, this movement often explores warmer, more introspective sonorities, allowing dissonance to resolve gently and organically. The basses are used throughout as the painter of the pastoral scene depicted throughout. A poignant tenor solo offers an ethereal contrast to the deep singing of the lower voices. The effect is one of contemplation – an echo not of place, but of memory and human experience.

The final movement, *Hicks' Farewell*, serves as a culmination, bringing together the musical and emotional threads of the work. Rhythmic energy intensifies, and the choral writing becomes more declamatory and unified. Elements from earlier movements may reappear in transformed ways, reinforcing the idea of echoes across time. Robertson builds toward a powerful, resonant conclusion, often marked by fuller textures and heightened harmonic color, suggesting a collective affirmation of identity and shared history.

Throughout *American Echoes*, Robertson demonstrates a keen sensitivity to text setting and choral color. His writing balances accessibility with sophistication, blending tonal foundations with contemporary harmonic language. The result is a work that feels both rooted and forward-looking – looking beyond the natural plain, even – offering the listener an exploration of how voices, past and present, continue to shape the soundscape of America.

Robertson is presently the director of choral activities at Tarleton State University, and is regarded as a composer, educator, and conductor. He is frequently a presenter of historic and contemporary works as both a soloist and conductor and is a composer of choral music for all voices.

Brent Michael Davids is an American composer and flautist. Davids is a member of the Stockbridge Munsee Community, an indigenous American tribe. His compositions are steeped in the authentic soundscapes of indigenous America. Music composed by Davids can be found in concert halls and on film and television. His musical compositions implore non-traditional sounds, including those of nature and broken speech, blurring the boundary between singing and ritual utterance. Harmonically, the music tends toward modal or pentatonic structures, reinforcing its connection to traditional indigenous musical languages.

Brent Michael Davids's *Zuni Sunrise*, the final movement of *Native American Suite*, draws upon traditional music of the Zuni people of the American Southwest. The suite itself brings together songs from multiple indigenous nations, preserving and reimagining them within a contemporary choral framework. *Zuni Sunrise* is a song of awakening – a musical invocation that calls forth the new day. Rooted in Pueblo tradition, the text and melodic material reflect a worldview in which the natural and spiritual realms are deeply interconnected. The rising sun is not merely a daily occurrence but a sacred renewal of life, and the music captures this sense of reverence and vitality. The use of repetitive melodic

patterns and rhythmic ostinato mirrors the cyclical nature of the sunrise itself, while also drawing listeners into a meditative, almost trance-like state.

Jake Runestad is a millennial American composer and conductor based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has composed music for a wide variety of musical genres and ensembles but has achieved greatest acclaim for his work in the genres of opera, orchestral music, choral music, and wind ensemble. Compositions by Runestad can be heard regularly in honor ensembles and in major concert halls throughout the country and abroad.

Nyon Nyon is an electrifying and rhythmically driven work that draws inspiration from the vibrant musical traditions of West Africa. Composed for a *cappella* chorus, the piece takes its title from a phonetic approximation of sounds found in African drumming patterns, immediately signaling its emphasis on rhythm, texture, and the voice as a percussive instrument. Rather than setting a traditional text, Runestad constructs the work using vocables—nonsensical syllables that allow singers to focus on rhythmic precision, articulation, and ensemble cohesion. This approach places the human voice in direct dialogue with drumming traditions, transforming the choir into a dynamic, multi-layered percussion ensemble. Interlocking rhythmic motives, syncopation, and patterns drive the piece forward, creating a sense of constant propulsion and kinetic energy.

Undine Smith Moore's *I, too* sets the iconic poem by Langston Hughes, giving voice to themes of resilience, dignity, and racial identity. Moore (1904–1989), often referred to as the “Dean of Black Women Composers,” was a composer, educator, and influential figure in American music. She spent much of her career at Virginia State College, where she mentored generations of musicians and developed a compositional style that blends classical forms with African American musical idioms, including spirituals and folk elements. Her magnum opus, *Scenes from the Life of a Martyr*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

Moore's setting of Hughes's text is both introspective and resolute, using harmonic color and motivic development to underscore the poem's narrative of hope and eventual affirmation. Though relatively concise, the work unfolds with a breadth of expression that can be heard as almost symphonic in scope. The opening is full and declamatory, supported by boisterous piano writing that undergirds the proclamation, “I, too, sing America!” This initial statement establishes both confidence and immediacy, setting the tone for the work's unfolding narrative.

A contrasting section follows, more reflective in character, even as the opening text is revisited. Here, Moore distributes the vocal lines more independently, creating a texture that suggests introspection and multiplicity of voice. The phrase “I am the darker brother” emerges from the lower voices and expands through the choir in a call-and-response manner, reinforcing both communal identity and individual assertion. An instrumental interlude then draws upon thematic material from the opening, before shifting in character to reflect the text “they send me to eat in the kitchen when company comes.” In this passage,

the bass voices and blues-inflected melodic contours introduce a subtle, satirical irony. This irony is further illuminated by the tenor solo on “but I laugh, and eat well, and grow strong,” supported by imitative “laughing” figures in the choir. Moore’s use of texture and timbre here reinforces the resilience embedded in the text. As the work progresses, octave leaps – particularly in the lower voices – add brightness and lift to the hopeful declarations of “tomorrow, I’ll be at the table when company comes” and “they’ll see how beautiful I am and be ashamed.” The music gradually weaves these elements into a cohesive tapestry, ultimately returning to the original musical material and reaffirming the opening statement with renewed strength and clarity.

Yale Camerata is thrilled to end its 40th season with a newly commissioned work by celebrated African American composer, Jeffery Ames. *A Litany of Praise* is a multi-movement choral work written for SATB chorus, chamber instruments, with soprano and baritone soli. The composition’s themes include sacred messages that the “expectations and promises made by the Lord would be fulfilled.” The texts are based on several scriptures, including:

Luke 1:37 *“For with God nothing shall be impossible.”*

I John 5:14 *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:”*

Joshua 21:45 *“There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”*

Psalms 62:5 *“There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”*

Ames enhanced these passages of scripture with original text as well as the poetry “We Praise You, O God” by Glenn Pease.

The first movement, *Joy*, is taken from the Pease poem and is an upbeat and joy-filled multi-meter movement. Featuring both English and Latin sacred texts, the overwhelming theme of praise rings through to the final chord.

The second movement, *Assurance*, opens with a haunting solo by a violin. The melody is then passed onto the soprano and baritone soloists. The text, taken from I John 5:14 and Joshua 21:45, reaffirms the confidence that God’s promises will be fulfilled, and that “He [does] hear us when we call.”

The third movement, *Celebration*, is just that, a spirited movement of praise. This fast-paced and festive movement includes the return of brass instruments. Ames creates a beautiful dance-like melody that culminates in a flurry of layered polyrhythms and hand claps, culminating in an exhilarating finish.

R. Nathaniel Dett's *The Chariot Jubilee* stands as one of his most vibrant and expansive contributions to the choral repertoire, drawing deeply from the tradition of African American spirituals while reimagining them through a sophisticated concert lens. *The Chariot Jubilee* reflects Dett's hallmark synthesis characteristics of both African American and European musical genres. Technically classified as a sacred motet, in an expanded format, the work features material taken from the African American spiritual. Considered a fantasia on the spiritual *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, the work evokes the imagery of a jubilant procession, rooted in the spiritual tradition of longing for deliverance and transcendence, often symbolized by the biblical "chariot" as a vehicle of salvation. Dett's treatment of the text is rhythmically animated, with syncopations and layered textures that create momentum and forward drive. The piano writing is particularly noteworthy, providing not only harmonic support but also motivic interjections that reinforce and sometimes anticipate the choral lines, contributing to the overall sense of exuberance. This edition is written for chamber orchestra.

Harmonically, Dett employs a blend of diatonic clarity and chromatic inflection, characteristic of early twentieth-century Romantic influence, while maintaining accessibility and directness of expression. Phrases are often built through repetition and incremental expansion, allowing the music to grow organically toward climactic points. Dynamic contrasts and sectional shifts contribute to a sense of narrative unfolding, with the featured tenor soloist who holds this unique work together, woven through the mini-sections heard throughout. While the spiritual theme is heard in fragments throughout the work, it is not heard in its entirety save one time, toward the end of the piece. This can almost be viewed as a reverse development in the work's form. *The Chariot Jubilee* is a fine example of the bonded musical language birthed in lived experience and nurtured in the learned that offers musicological insight into the important work of Dett as a composer and musicologist in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Dave Riley, a contemporary American composer, is known for his sensitive and expressive choral writing. In this setting of the traditional Gaelic text, he captures the timeless beauty of the blessing through flowing lines, rich harmonies, and gentle, supportive textures. The work begins with a serene invocation of peace – "May the road rise to meet you, may the wind be always at your back" – and unfolds in a contemplative arc that evokes both reverence and comfort. Riley's music emphasizes clarity of text and lyricism, allowing each word to resonate and carry its profound meaning. Scored for mixed choir with lush harmonic support, *A Celtic Blessing* envelops listeners in a sense of tranquility and hope, offering a musical benediction that speaks across generations. As the Yale Camerata closes each performance with this piece, it honors tradition, community, and the enduring power of music to send us forth renewed and uplifted.

Unless otherwise noted, program notes by Vinroy D. Brown, Jr., M.A., M.M.,
Adjunct Assistant Professor of Sacred Music, Westminster Choir College

Yale Camerata is a ninety-voice vocal ensemble whose members are Yale graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, staff, and experienced singers from the New Haven community. Conducted by Dr. Felicia Barber, the ensemble performs a widely varied spectrum of sacred choral literature, with a special commitment to choral music of our time. The Camerata was founded by Marguerite L. Brooks in 1985. The Camerata has collaborated with Yale Schola Cantorum, Yale Glee Club, Yale Philharmonia, Yale Symphony, Yale Band, Yale Chamber Players, Yale Collegium Musicum, the New Haven Chorale, and the symphony orchestras of Hartford, New Haven, and Norwalk. The ensemble has also performed for Yale Music Spectrum and New Music New Haven. In 2026 Yale Camerata was invited to perform as a featured choir at the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Division conference in Providence, RI.

The Camerata has been heard on Connecticut Public Radio and national broadcasts of National Public Radio's program *Performance Today*. Guest conductors have included Marin Alsop, Simon Carrington, Andre Thomas, Matthew Halls, David Hill, Nicholas McGegan, Erwin Ortner, Stefan Parkman, Grete Pedersen, Krzysztof Penderecki, Helmuth Rilling, Jaap Schröder, Robert Shaw, Dale Warland, and Craig Hella Johnson. The Institute of Sacred Music has commissioned works for Camerata by Martin Bresnick, Daniel Kellogg, Aaron Jay Kernis, Robert Kyr, Tawnie Olson, Stephen Paulus, Daniel Pinkham, Robert Sirota, Julia Wolfe, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, among others. The chorus has sung premiere performances of works by many other composers, including Kathryn Alexander and Francine Trester.

Dr. Felicia Barber is the associate professor, adjunct, of choral conducting at Yale University and conductor of the Camerata. In addition to teaching graduate-level choral conductors and aspiring undergraduate conductors, Dr. Barber is developing a new initiative designed to prepare Yale students to work with young musicians on choral music in school and church settings. Currently, she teaches courses in conducting, as well as Advanced Choral Pedagogy, and African American Choral Literature. As conductor of the Yale Camerata, Dr. Barber is thrilled to announce that the ensemble was recently honored by their selection as a performing ensemble for the 2026 Eastern Division American Choral Directors Association's (ACDA) Conference in Providence, RI.

Prior to her appointment at Yale, Dr. Barber served as associate professor of music and director of choral activities at Westfield State University (WSU) in Westfield, MA, where she conducted the Chamber Chorale, University Chorus, and Gospel Choir, and taught courses in conducting and choral methods. In addition to her position at WSU, Dr. Barber also served as choral lecturer for the summer master's program at Gordon College for five years. There she taught courses in choral conducting and choral music education for the M.M.E. degree.

Dr. Barber's research interests include effective teaching strategies, fostering classroom diversity and incorporating equity and justice initiatives in choral curricula, and the

linguistic performance practice of African American spirituals. She has contributed to such periodicals as the American Choral Directors Association's *Choral Journal* and is the author of *A New Perspective for the Use of Dialect in African American Spirituals: History, Context, and Linguistics* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

Additional projects include serving as curator and editor for the "Felicia Barber Choral Series," a choral series with Hinshaw Music Publications to promote and amplify music of new BIPOC composers and arrangers. The inaugural piece of the series was published in March of 2025 and is entitled *Ren Ri Si Gui* by Yiran Zhao. In addition, Dr. Barber's poetry has recently been featured in a new choral project entitled *Dedication* (music composed by Dr. Zanaida Robles). Dr. Barber also served as the conductor for the SATB premiere at the American Choral Director's Eastern Division SATB High School Honor Choir; the SSAA version was premiered March of 2025 in Dallas as part of ACDA's National Conference with the SSAA National High School Honor Choir.

An active member of the American Choral Directors Association, she has presented her research at state, divisional, and national conferences. Dr. Barber has also served the organization on the National Diversity Committee, the Eastern Division 2020 Conference committee, and is the current president of the Massachusetts ACDA board. In addition, she is regularly engaged as a guest conductor for youth and community festivals around the country, including several All-State ensembles including Vermont, Oklahoma, California, Louisiana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Rhode Island. She also conducted the ACDA Eastern Division Conference in 2024. Recent events include North Carolina SATB High School All State Choir in November of 2024 and a Carnegie Hall Festival in March of 2025.

Dr. Barber earned a B.M. in vocal performance from Oral Roberts University, in Tulsa, OK, an M.M. in choral music education from Mansfield University, in Mansfield, PA, and a Ph.D. in Music Education and Choral Conducting from The Florida State University.

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, Reid 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. Reid 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.

Jeffery L. Ames serves as Director of Choral Activities, and is a Full Professor within the School of Music at Belmont University. His prior appointments include Assistant Director of Choral Activities at Baylor University and Choral Director at Edgewater High School and Lincoln High School in Florida.

As a choral clinician, Dr. Ames has conducted senior and junior high school mixed and male choirs at the state and regional conventions of the American Choral Directors Association and the Music Educator's National Conference, including the inaugural Florida Male All-State Chorus, and annually at Carnegie Hall with the National Youth Choir. He has performed and guest conducted internationally in the countries of Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Estonia, South Korea, and the Republic of Ghana.

An accomplished accompanist, he has performed and collaborated with well-known conductors such as André Thomas, Jo-Michael Scheibe, Lynne Gackle, and Anton Armstrong. Additionally he has collaborated with well-known celebrities such as Trisha Yearwood, Laura Bell Bundy, CeCe Winans, Connie Smith, Ricky Skaggs and The Whites, internationally acclaimed mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves, Michael W. Smith, Kathy Mattea, Sheryl Crow, and legendary rock band the Rolling Stones.

With a reputation as a distinguished and well-respected composer and arranger, Dr. Ames's music has been premiered by the Florida Music Educators Association, the Florida American Choral Directors Association, the Southern Division of ACDA, at National

ACDA Conferences, and on the 2017, 2015, 2013, and 2011 telecasts of *Christmas at Belmont*. His compositions and arrangements are published with Colla Voce Music, Earthsongs, Santa Barbara Music Publishing, and Walton Music Corporation.

Professor Ames holds the Ph.D. in Choral Conducting/Choral Music Education and a Master of Choral Music Education degree from The Florida State University, and a Bachelor of Music degree, with a double major in Vocal Performance and Piano Accompanying, from James Madison University. He holds the honor of being the first recipient of the National ACDA James Mulholland Choral Music Fellowship, as well as being the first African American to represent the United States in the ACDA International Conductor Exchange Program. He lives in Nashville with his lovely wife and three children.

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.

Matthew Dexter, bass-baritone from McKinney, Texas, is earning his Master of Music degree in Early Music Voice at Yale University and the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (Class of 2026). As an undergraduate performing with the University of North Texas Opera, Dexter played the roles of Micha in *The Bartered Bride*, Bartolo in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Zuniga in *Carmen*, and The Conductor in Lisa DeSpain's *That Hellbound Train*. As a vocal fellow at Spoleto Festival USA, he has sung in multiple choral concerts, appeared in the 2022 world premiere of Rhiannon Giddens's and Michael Abels's Pulitzer Prize-winning opera *Omar*, and in 2023 played the role of the Old Doctor in Samuel Barber's *Vanessa*. Dexter also participated in a vocal fellowship with the Grant Park Music Festival in the summer of 2025. In addition to receiving the audience favorite award, Dexter placed third in the James Toland Vocal Arts Competition and recently participated in Houston Grand

Opera's Young Artist Vocal Academy. Dexter was also the 2022–2023 winner of the UNT Presser Undergraduate Scholar Award. In the winter of 2025, Dexter toured as a soloist with Apollo's Fire Baroque Orchestra. Following his final year at Yale, Dexter will join the 2026–2027 Ryan Opera Center ensemble at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Albert R. Lee is an internationally acclaimed tenor, scholar, and higher education leader whose career bridges the worlds of performance, scholarship, and service. Lauded for his “vocally sumptuous” and “musically distinctive” singing, he has appeared with Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Palm Beach Opera, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh, Vermont Opera, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, Saint Luke's Chamber Orchestra, the Collegiate Chorale of New York City, the Caramoor International Music Festival, and the Aspen Music Festival. His operatic repertoire includes Don Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, Don Ottavio in *Don Giovanni*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Ferrando in *Così fan tutte*, and Lindoro in *L'Italiana in Algeri*, alongside concert performances of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabeus*, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater*.

A dedicated interpreter of American music, Lee has performed extensively with the American Spiritual Ensemble, preserving and expanding the performance tradition of the Negro Spirituals across the United States and abroad. He has also curated and performed recital programs devoted to the poetry of Langston Hughes, including a lauded appearance at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall. His recent concert engagements include Adolphus Hailstork's *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* with the London Symphony Orchestra and at Carnegie Hall; R. Nathaniel Dett's *The Ordering of Moses* with IN Series Opera in Washington, D.C., and the New Haven Symphony; *The Chariot Jubilee* with the Ithaca College Choirs; and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with the Vista Philharmonic.

Lee's discography reflects his dual commitment to performance and scholarship. He is featured on *A Breath of Air* (Navona Records, 2024), a recording of art songs by Monica Houghton setting texts by Langston Hughes and Walt Whitman, highlighted on Apple Music Classical's “The Classical Voice” playlist. He is also the tenor soloist in George Walker's Pulitzer Prize–winning *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra*, recorded with Sinfonia da Camera (Albany Records, 2013), and has appeared on several releases with the American Spiritual Ensemble, including the nationally televised PBS documentary *The Spirituals*.

As a scholar, Lee's research centers on the intersection of African American literature and music, with particular focus on Langston Hughes. His doctoral treatise, *The Poetic Voice of Langston Hughes in American Art Song* (Florida State University, 2012), established the foundation for an array of lectures, publications, and conference presentations. His writings include chapters in *Music Education on the Verge: Stories of Pandemic Teaching and Transformative Change* (2022) and *Prejudice, Stigma, Privilege, and Oppression: A Behavioral Health Handbook* (2020). He has presented at the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the American Choral Directors Association, and Columbia University's “Restaging

the Harlem Renaissance,” among many other venues. A compelling public speaker, he is in demand as a lecturer and keynote presenter, with recent appearances at Sacred Heart University, Bethune Cookman University, and Arizona State University. His widely viewed TEDx talk, *When I Sing the Anthem* (2017), offers a deeply personal reflection on patriotism, identity, and the power of music.

Lee currently serves as Associate Professor of Music and Associate Dean for Student Life and Community Engagement at the Yale School of Music, where he previously served as the inaugural Director of Equity, Belonging, and Student Life. At Yale, he teaches courses in music literature and culture – including surveys of Black composers, the history of the spiritual, the literary voice of Langston Hughes in music, artistry and entrepreneurship – while also overseeing student life initiatives, career development resources, and the Music in Schools Initiative. He has also held faculty positions at the University of Nevada, Reno, Troy University, and Lincoln University, and has directed university opera productions ranging from *Suor Angelica* to world premieres.

A committed advocate for equity and leadership in the arts, Lee has served on the boards of the Reno Philharmonic and the Neighborhood Music School, as regional officer of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, and as president of the Pi Zeta Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. His leadership has been recognized with the University of Nevada, Reno’s Inclusion, Equity, and Diversity Leadership Award (2018) and the Knight of Honor Award from Notre Dame High School (2023).

Lee received his Bachelor of Music degree (cum laude) from the University of Connecticut, Master of Music and Professional Studies diplomas from The Juilliard School, and Doctor of Music from Florida State University. His early training included residencies and fellowships with Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Palm Beach Opera, the Aspen Music Festival, the Caramoor International Music Festival, and the American Institute of Musical Studies in Graz, Austria.

Dr. Imo Nse Imeh is a visual artist and scholar of African Diaspora art, whose work considers historical and philosophical issues around the Black body and cultural identity.

Dr. Imeh’s work has been exhibited in numerous public venues including the August Wilson African American Cultural Center (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), the Fine Arts Center Galleries of Bowling Green State University (Bowling Green, Ohio), the Sigal Museum of the Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society (Easton, Pennsylvania), the Mariposa Museum (Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts), University Museum of Contemporary Art (Amherst, Massachusetts), the Urban Institute for Contemporary Art (Grand Rapids, Michigan). His work is represented in the Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art; in the museum collection of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; as well as in a number of private collections; and it has been featured by the *PBS NewsHour*, *New England Public Media*, *Orion Magazine*, and in the contemporary art and culture magazine *Art New England*. A series of Dr. Imeh’s works appear on the covers of six 2024 issues of the

medical journal *Biological Psychiatry*, edited by Dr. John Krystal of Yale University. Dr. Imeh has been the recipient of the Mass Cultural Council Artist Fellowship for his studio project *Benediction*, a Project Evolution Grant from the ValleyCreates Program of Mass MoCA and The Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, a Holyoke Cultural Council Grant, and the Springfield Cultural Council Grant.

Imeh earned a B.A. from Columbia University in 2002 and Ph.D. in the History of African Art from Yale University in 2009. He is Professor of Art and Art History at Westfield State University in Massachusetts.

For more information about Dr. Imeh's art and upcoming exhibitions please visit his website: <https://imoimeh.com/>.

A Reflection of Camerata's 40th Anniversary Season by Dr. Felicia Barber

The 40th Anniversary Season of Yale Camerata has been truly memorable! We had so many amazing performances as well as poignant collaborations with faculty, alums, and guest artists. We kicked off the season with the "Yale Camerata Homecoming Concert," featuring all three conductors of Yale Camerata as well as 75 returning alums. "Advent Concert: A Celebration in Song," one of my favorite performances of my tenure thus far, included the Yale premiere of Margaret Bond's *The Ballad of the Brown King*. In February, the ensemble performed brilliantly at the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) Eastern Division Conference in Providence, RI, as one of only ten choirs chosen to perform for the regional conference representing fifteen states. And we conclude this season with a celebration of American music in our concert "An American Songbook," which features a powerful new commission, *A Litany of Praise*, by Dr. Jeffery Ames!

I remain very grateful for the opportunity to serve as the conductor and artistic director of such an amazing ensemble and would like to take a moment to thank all the outstanding contributors who have helped to make this 40th season one to remember.

With Much gratitude

Dr. José García León *Dean of Yale School of Music*

Dr. Martin Jean *Director of the Yale Institute of Sacred Music (ISM)*

Our amazing ISM Concert Office staff

Don Youngberg *Camerata Manager*

Jeff Hazewinkel *Concert Office Manager*

Aric Isaacs *Production Manager*

ISM Marketing Team

Amanda Patrick, Craig Kirkland, Maura Gianakos

Harold Shapiro, Photography

Virtual Art Exhibition: Dr. Imo Nse Imeh, Anesu Nyamupingidza, and Eben Graves

Jungmin Youn *Staff Accompanist*
Reid Simmons *Graduate Assistant*
Anthony Washington *Graduate Assistant*

Camerata Leadership Committee

John Phelan, Donald Kohn, Carolyn Ladd, Carey Bates, Terrence Wu, Al Powers, and David Stein

Guest Artists

Prof. Emerita Marguerite Brooks *Founding Conductor*
Dr. André Thomas *Guest Conductor*
Dr. Jeffery L. Ames *Commissioned Composer*
Dr. Imo Nse Imeh *Guest Visual Artist*
Vinroy Brown *Program Notes*

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