



MIDDLEBURY  
PERFORMING ARTS SERIES  
P R E S E N T S

LARGE  
PRINT

# *Choral Chameleon: Music for Chameleons*

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2023  
MAHANEY ARTS CENTER, ROBISON HALL





CHORAL CHAMELEON

# music for chameleons

A Concert Inspired by a Truman Capote Short Story

**Choral Chameleon Ensemble**  
Vince Peterson, Artistic Director

*Program*

**Music for Chameleons**

**In quoscumque locos** **Orlando di Lasso**

**The Door** **Andrew Maxfield**

**Les Chansons des Roses** **Morten Lauridsen**

I. En une seule fleur

II. Contre qui, rose

III. De ton rêve trop plein

IV. La rose complète

V. Dirait-on

**Children of Eden** **Stephen Schwartz (arr. Audrey Snyder)**

Alyssa Venora, soloist

**Guest House** **Edward Thompson**

**Pieces of My Heart**

**Lauren Bydalek**

Molly Rabuffo and Matthew Robbins, soloists

**Virtual Insanity**

**Jamiroquai (arr. Mark Brymer)**

**Threads of Joy**

**Dale Trumbore**

**Both Sides Now**

**Joni Mitchell (arr. Vince Peterson)**

Greta Moorhead, soloist

*A replay of this concert is available on demand until 7:30 PM ET on Sunday,*

*March 5 at*

**<http://go.middlebury.edu/Chameleon-Concert/>**

*This residency is possible thanks to support from the Paul Nelson  
Performance Endowment and the Rothrock Family Residency Fund.*

## **A note from Artistic Director, Vince Peterson**

During the pandemic shutdown, a meme floating around on social media said: "Things are not getting worse. Things are being uncovered. We must hold each other tightly and continue to pull back the curtain." Around the same time, I found a short story by Truman Capote called "Music for Chameleons." Of course, the title piqued my interest. Reading this short eight-page story reminded me of how forward-thinking, and ahead of his time Capote was. This story, which only has two characters, is nothing but a conversation. The conversation is happening between two people who could not be more different from one another: in race, class, age, gender, interests, and social status.

As one reads the story, there is an increasing understanding for the reader that although certain things are being discussed in a seemingly ordinary manner within this conversation, the actual substance of it is bubbling below in the subtext. This made me think about how we face many long-overdue social reckonings in our shared communities in this era of human civilization. It also made me think about how it's natural for human beings to shy away from difficult conversations: especially about accepting change. We sometimes veil our true feelings and meaning behind what is easier to say aloud. We do this instead of summoning the courage to say what needs to be expressed directly in

small, intimate, meaningful conversations. We do this instead of doing what the meme said: "hold each other tightly and continue to pull back the curtain."

I started Choral Chameleon to start a conversation in the concert music and choral music communities: to challenge the status quo, stand up against inequality, and show budding choral musicians in the next generations that they don't have to follow the widely prescribed path often forcibly expected of them in order to be successful in the business of musicking. Now, fifteen years later, I hope we can collectively keep up our momentum as an influential company of artists exploring this extraordinary art form. This program is the beginning of a longer choral soliloquy on this topic. I hope you find it resonant.

Thanks for being here with us this evening!

## **Texts, Translations, and Program Notes**

### **DI LASSO In quoscumque locos**

(translated by Vince Peterson)

*In quoscumque locos videam contraria cerno.*

*Illi nigra placent illi sed displicet album.*

*Illa viro mulier vult vivere foedere juncta.  
Musica cantores amat et celebratur ad ipsi.  
Est incredibilis penitus mutatio rerum  
sic breve quod legitur longum pronuntiat ille,  
quotquot sunt homines totidem sententiae habentur.*

In whatever places I look, I see opposites.

A person likes black but dislikes white,

A person may want to be united with another forever  
(while another may not).

Music loves its singers and is celebrated by them.

It is incredible (to behold) how things profoundly change.

Thus what is complex is overly simplified because

there are as many opinions in the world as there are people.

## **MAXFIELD The Door**

**Poem by Miroslav Holub**

(translated by Ian Milner)

Go and open the door.

Maybe outside there's

a tree, or a wood,  
a garden, or a magic city.

Go and open the door.

Maybe a dog's rummaging.

Maybe you'll see a face,

or an eye,

or the picture

of a picture.

Go and open the door.

If there's a fog

it will clear.

Go and open the door.

Even if there's only

the darkness ticking,

even if there's only

the hollow wind,

even if

nothing



is there,  
go and open the door.

At least  
there will be  
a draft.

*Reprinted with permission from Bloodaxe Books.*

"Go," says Miroslav Holub, "and open the door." Go where? Open which door? To my ears, Holub's playful text is an invitation – maybe even a good-natured dare – for us to open ourselves to the unknown and unfamiliar. Sure, he teases us with some whimsical imagery – maybe there's a magic city or a rummaging dog on the other side of the door – but he leads us to a profound realization: even if "nothing" is there, it's still worth opening the door, if only to let in the breeze. Even though we live in a hyperconnected era that can bring us into contact with just about anyone or anything, it's easy tacitly to dismiss "unfamiliar" as bad. We do it all the time with "othered" people and ways of living, even "other" countries. To the extent that a certain fearful

mania grips so many people these days, let's fight back, if for no other reason than our own sanity and joy, by opening the door!

Also, there's a certain jauntiness in the text. It's fun, it's mysterious, it's as cheerful as it is urgent. I wanted to mirror those qualities in the shifting moods and colors of the music. There are Gospel- and Appalachia-inspired shouty bits and there quiet, pondering, foggy bits. All in all, the theme of "going" and "opening" guided my design decisions. Finally, given the playful spirit of (the English translation of) Holub's text, I gave myself permission to be playful with the sounds of the words themselves, like stretching and contorting the diphthong "eye" (ah-ee) and playing up the fact that the interior "f" of draught/draft (breeze) actually sounds like a draft if you let it!

— Andrew Maxfield

**LAURIDSEN Les Chansons des Roses**

**Poems by Rainer Maria Rilke**

(translated by Barbara and Erica Muhl)

## I. En une seule fleur

It is we, perhaps, who proposed  
that you replenish your bloom.  
Enchanted by this charade,  
your abundance dared.

You were rich enough to fulfill  
yourself a hundred times over in a single flower;  
such is the state of one who loves ...  
But you never did think otherwise.

## II. Contre qui, rose

Against whom, rose,  
have you assumed  
these thorns?  
Is it your too fragile joy  
that forced you  
to become this  
armed thing?

But from whom does it protect you,  
this exaggerated defense?

How many enemies have I  
lifted from you  
who did not fear it at all?  
On the contrary, from summer to autumn  
you wound the affection  
that is given you.

### III. De ton rêve trop plein

Overflowing with your dream,  
flower filled with flowers,  
wet as one who weeps,  
you bow to the morning.

Your sweet powers which still are sleeping  
in misty desire,  
unfold these tender forms  
joining cheeks and breasts.

### IV. La rose complète

I have such awareness of your  
being, perfect rose,  
that my will unites you

with my heart in celebration.

I breathe you in, rose, as if you were  
all of life,  
and I feel the perfect friend  
of a perfect friend.

#### V. Dirait-on

Abandon surrounding abandon,  
tenderness touching tenderness ...

Your oneness endlessly  
caresses itself, so they say;

self-caressing  
through its own clear reflection.

Thus you invent the theme  
of Narcissus fulfilled.

In addition to his vast output of German poetry, Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) wrote nearly 400 poems in French. His poems on roses struck me as especially charming, filled with gorgeous lyricism, deftly drafted and elegant in their

imagery. These exquisite poems are primarily light, joyous and playful, and the musical settings are designed to enhance these characteristics and capture their delicate beauty and sensuousness. Distinct melodic and harmonic materials recur throughout the cycle, especially between Rilke's poignant "Contre qui, rose" (set as a wistful nocturne) and his moving "La rose complète". The final piece "Dirait-on" is composed as a tuneful chanson populaire, or folksong, that weaves together two melodic ideas first heard in fragmentary form in preceding movements.

— Morten Lauridsen

## **SCHAWRTZ Children of Eden**

### **Lyrics by Stephen Schwartz**

Like this brief day  
My light is nearly gone  
But through the night  
My children you will go on  
You will know heartache

Prayers that don't work  
And times of bitter circumstances  
But I still believe in second chances

Children of Eden  
Where have we left you  
Born to uncertainty  
Destined for pain  
Sins of your parents  
Haunt you and test you  
This your inheritance  
Fire and rain

Children of Eden  
Try not to blame us  
We were just human to error prone  
Children of Eden will you reclaim us  
You and your children to come  
Someday you'll come home  
Children of eden  
Where is our garden  
Where is the innocence

We can't reclaim  
Once eyes are opened  
Must those eyes harden  
Lost in the wilderness  
Must we remain

Oh my precious children  
If you think of us try not to blame us  
We were just human to error prone  
Children of Eden you will reclaim us  
You and your children to come  
Someday you'll come home

### **THOMPSON Guest House**

**Poem by Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi**

This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.



Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,  
still, treat each guest honorably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.

**BYDALEK Pieces of My Heart**  
**Poem by Lauren Bydalek**

I have left pieces of my heart  
All across the world

And I have been working my whole life  
Just to leave where I've come from

Searching for answers  
To the questions I didn't know  
Craving freedom  
From the black and white routine

Some have the path fall before them  
Some are caught, entangled  
Venturing to make a way  
In a journey not foreseen

And now that I've wandered a distance away  
I don't even know where I'd go  
Besides the places that I've been  
Or the one that I call home

Taking for granted  
The wide open spaces  
Ignoring the sky

Brimming with kaleidoscope sunsets

I have left pieces of my heart

All across the world

But they're not left in the places I've been

They're with the people I've met

The inspiration for this piece came out of a period of major transitions in my life. The lyrics tell a story of where I've been and my relationship to where I grew up. When I was young, I always wanted to leave Nebraska, but over the years, I've come to appreciate it more and more. I had taken for granted the simplistic beauty of the plains of the midwest. Beyond that, I've come to realize home isn't as much a place as it is a feeling. I truly believe I've left a little of myself with everyone who I have connected with over the years.

—Lauren Bydalek

## JAMIROQUAI Virtual Insanity

### Lyrics by Jamiroquai

Yeah, it's a wonder man can eat at all  
When things are big that should be small  
Who can tell what magic spells we'll be doing for us  
And I'm giving all my love to this world  
Only to be told  
I can't see, I can't breathe  
No more will we be

And nothing's gonna change the way we live  
'Cause we can always take, but never give  
And now that things are changing for the worse, see  
Whoa, it's a crazy world we're living in  
And I just can't see that half of us immersed in sin  
Is all we have to give these

Futures made of virtual insanity, now  
Always seem to be governed by this love we have  
For these useless, twisting, of our new technology  
Oh, now there is no sound, for we all live underground

And I'm thinking what a mess we're in  
Hard to know where to begin  
If I could slip the sickly ties that earthly man has made  
And now every mother can choose the color  
Of her child, that's not nature's way  
Well, that's what they said yesterday  
There's nothing left to do, but pray  
I think it's time to find a new religion  
Whoa, it's so insane  
To synthesize another strain  
There's something in these futures  
That we have to be told  
  
Futures made of virtual insanity...

## **TRUMBORE Threads of Joy**

**Poem by Laura Foley**

I have noticed joy  
how it threads below

the darkness.

Have you seen it too?

And have you heard it,

how it speaks

the unspeakable,

the bliss?

A kind of silence, a light

beneath pain.

Have you noticed?

It rises like fingers

and then – look!

it presses through.

I've always loved when songs about happiness are set in a minor key – think Nina Simone singing “Feeling Good” – and the harmonic language acknowledges that we can't have joy without recognizing its opposite.

Threads of Joy has similar undertones, and this setting of Laura Foley's text by the same name is not just an exultation of happiness. Rather, it recognizes how we emerge from

darkness and pain back into light, and the music captures this duality in ever-shifting, prismatic harmonies.

Threads of Joy was commissioned by the Hopkins High School Concert Choir (Philip Brown, conductor). This score is published in Hal Leonard's Mark Foster Series.

—Dale Trumbore

## **MITCHEL Both Sides Now**

### **Lyrics by Joni Mitchell**

Rows and flows of angel hair  
And ice cream castles in the air  
And feather canyons everywhere  
I've looked at clouds that way

But now they only block the sun  
They rain and they snow on everyone  
So many things I would have done  
But clouds got in my way

I've looked at clouds from both sides now  
From up and down and still somehow

It's cloud illusions I recall  
I really don't know clouds at all

Moons and Junes and Ferris wheels  
The dizzy dancing way that you feel  
As every fairy tale comes real  
I've looked at love that way

But now it's just another show  
You leave 'em laughing when you go  
And if you care, don't let them know  
Don't give yourself away

I've looked at love from both sides now  
From give and take and still somehow  
It's love's illusions I recall  
I really don't know love at all  
Tears and fears and feeling proud  
To say, "I love you" right out loud  
Dreams and schemes and circus crowds  
I've looked at life that way



But now old friends are acting strange  
They shake their heads, they say I've changed  
Something's lost, and something's gained  
In living every day

I've looked at life from both sides now  
From win and lose and still somehow  
It's life's illusions I recall  
I really don't know life at all

### *About the Artists*

#### **Choral Chameleon Ensemble**

Mi Na Shin, Soprano

Alyssa Venora, Soprano

Michelle Coladonato, Soprano

Molly Rabuffo, Soprano

Annie Beliveau, Alto

Mariko Watt, Alto

Kelly Baxter Golding, Alto

Greta Moorhead, Contralto  
Matthew Robbins, Tenor  
Kameron Ghanavati, Tenor  
Matthew Finkel, Tenor  
Alex McCoy, Tenor  
Ari Messenger, Baritone  
Keith Sisterhenm, Baritone  
Richard Berg, Bass-Baritone  
Jared Graveley, Bass



Choral Chameleon is a next-gen choral music company championing new music and embracing immersive performance with visual art, movement, taste, texture and more. Its interdisciplinary artistic collaborations invite all to take part and experience the shared human connections of music.

Composed of a professional ensemble, a chorus of avocational and professional singers, and an Institute for composers and conductors of choral music, Choral Chameleon is on a mission to reinvent and broaden the boundaries of choral music to create new possibilities with the artistic community at large.

Since its inception, Choral Chameleon has premiered 250+ original compositions and arrangements. Exploring the connections between choral music and the arts has led to new musical motifs, like the blending of an Indian raga with John Mayer's classic Bigger Than My Body, and new appreciations of well-known songs, like Sting's Fragile.

Founder and artistic director Vince Peterson was the 2018 recipient of the Chorus America Louis Botto Award for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Zeal. Choral Chameleon was the 2015 recipient of Chorus America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. And the ensemble was honored to be the first (2017-2018) Artist Group in Residence at National Sawdust. It is one of the only choral music organizations in New York City to be directly funded by The National Endowment for the Arts.

**Vince Peterson, Artistic Director**, is a respected choral conductor, composer, and teacher of music in the United States. His 20-year hybrid career spans the worlds of choral music, theater, sacred music, and music education. He has, however, established himself most prominently in the world of choral music, notably having founded the "shape-shifting" vocal ensemble Choral Chameleon in 2008. Across his

work, he is responsible for presenting nearly 300 premieres of new choral and theater music in the last fifteen years and has won critical acclaim in *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, *The New York Concert Review*, *I Care If You Listen*, *The Examiner*, and other publications. He is also a recipient of the prestigious ASCAP/Chorus America Award for Adventurous Programming.

In 2003, Peterson earned the BM in Composition from San Francisco Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of celebrated composer Conrad Susa. He has also studied composition with David Conte, Elinor Armer, and Philip Lasser. In 2007, he earned a Double MM in Composition and Choral Conducting from Mannes College of Music where he studied under pioneer conductor, Mark Shapiro as well as composer David Loeb. Upon receipt of his Master's Degree, he was awarded the singular Music Teacher's League Award for 2007.

As a prolific arranger, Peterson has received seven commissions to date from the multi-Grammy® Award-winning ensemble Chanticleer, whose YouTube videos of his work have garnered over half a million views. Several of his choral arrangements and original compositions have become staples for choirs across the United States. Distinguished performance venues include Chicago Symphony Hall, San Francisco's

War Memorial Opera House, Bartok National Concert Hall in Budapest, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Carnegie Hall, among others.

A recognized thought-leader in the music world, The New York Times called Peterson "authoritative beyond his... years," and The Brooklyn Eagle praised his work as "a stunning symphony of the spiritual and secular," while hailing him as a solo performer "with depth and vigor" who "provided a universal context which resonated with his audience."

In 2018, Vince was awarded the Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal by Chorus America, a lifetime distinction he shares with only fifteen of the most influential choral musicians in the United States.

He has been Artistic Director of Empire City Men's Chorus since 2014, and led the group through its 25th Anniversary Season.

<http://choralchameleon.com>

With special thanks to those friends who have played a major role  
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### Land Acknowledgement

*Middlebury College sits on land which has served as a site of meeting and exchange among indigenous peoples since time immemorial. The Western Abenaki are the traditional caretakers of these Vermont lands and waters, which they call Ndakinna, or "homeland."*

*We remember their connection to this region and the hardships they continue to endure.*

*We give thanks for the opportunity to share in the bounty of this place and to protect it.*