



Presents

Dark Night of the Soul

**A Master's Conducting Recital
Owen Peck, Conductor**

Magnificat Primo (1640)

Claudio Monteverdi
(1567-1643)

Erin Taylor and Regina Scime, *sopranos*
Kari Francis and Scottie Rogers, *altos*
Samuel Ary and Maxwell Trochlil, *tenors*
Preston Harrell and Jongsoo Hwang, *basses*

Tristis Est Anima Mea (1611)

Carlo Gesualdo
(1566-1613)

Tenebrae Factae Sunt (1690)

Marc-Antoine Charpentier
(1643-1704)

Jeffrey Dean, *bass-baritone*

Tenebrae Responsories (2006)
III. Jesum Tradidit Impius

James MacMillan
(b. 1959)

Erin Taylor, *soprano*

Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks (1941)

Herbert Howells (1892-1983)
orch. Howard Eckdahl

Dark Night of the Soul (2010)

Ola Gjeilo
(b. 1978)

LaBar Performance Hall
Sunday, February 25, 5:00 p.m.

This is a degree recital for the Master of Sacred Music.
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Personnel

Owen Peck, *Conductor*

Ellis Anderson, *Collaborative Pianist and Continuo Organist*

Concordia Vocal Ensemble

Soprano

Faith Fleming
Nicole Gerdes
Erin Taylor

Tenor

Ellis Andeson
Joseph Balistreri
Cristian Ortega
Maxwell Trochlil

Alto

Kari Francis
Gabriella Lindhurst
Scottie Rogers
Maria Alejandrina Tinta Segovia

Bass

Richard Gress
Preston Harrell
Jongsoo Hwang
Nicholas Schefstad

Ritornello Strings

Jameson Cooper, *violin 1*
Jessica Bennett, *violin 2*
Rachel Goff, *viola*
Sarah Hill, *viola*
Rose Wollman, *viola*
Justin Goldsmith, *cello*
Donald Brittain, *bass*

Owen Peck is a student of Dr. Nancy Menk.

Program Notes

Across time and space, in countless cultures, a concept of the soul is central to how we think of ourselves as people. For Christians, the soul is what makes us living, thinking beings, and it is the soul that will live on eternally after the body dies. The soul also has secular connotations in mainstream culture. A person's soul might be seen to represent their innermost self, the things that make them uniquely who they are. Alternatively, some see the soul as a person's moral code—we all know what happens, after all, if you sell your soul to the devil. Ultimately, I think that what so many conceptions of the soul share is an idea about what it means to be human. Spirituality, emotions, human relationships, a sense of right and wrong—all of these are tied to our inner selves, some part of us that would seem to transcend mere physical, bodily reality.

Today's concert explores the soul in various spiritual and emotional states through sacred music. Beginning with the "Magnificat," representing Mary's joy in the works of God, we then journey through the sorrow of Jesus' passion and death, the intense longing of the soul for God, and finally the soul's transformation through grace. It is my hope that this program of sacred music will be equally meaningful whether viewed through a Christian lens or a secular one. In the end, the composers of these pieces tapped into the universal human emotions of the texts at hand to create impactful music. I find that all of these pieces, in their own way, center the *human* experience of the divine, speaking—for lack of a better phrase—directly to the soul.

My soul magnifies the Lord

Claudio Monteverdi was one of the most famed musicians in Europe in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, viewed as a transitional figure between the Renaissance and Baroque. Credited with composing the first operas, he also composed vast quantities of sacred music. "Magnificat Primo" comes from his collection *Selva morale e spirituale* ("Moral and spiritual forest"), an anthology of sacred compositions including psalm settings, hymns, and a mass. Composed late in his life, during his appointment at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, it can also be viewed as an anthology of compositional techniques he had refined throughout his career, mixing contrapuntal choral writing in the *stile antico* with passages of dramatic solo vocal writing influenced by his operatic style. Here, Monteverdi deploys these diverse techniques to colorfully paint the text of the well-known Marian hymn. *Magnificat Primo* employs an antiphonal double choir texture, with an unusual scoring for three violas in addition to two obbligato violins.

Sorrowful is my soul, even unto death

Carlo Gesualdo's setting of *Tristis Est Anima Mea* begins this group of three settings of Tenebrae Responsories—liturgical texts narrating the passion of Jesus during Holy Week. These are among the most solemn texts used in the liturgy. Gesualdo was a larger-than-life figure. An Italian aristocrat, he bucked class norms for his time by working as a musician. In addition to his

reputation as an innovator in the practice of harmony in the late Renaissance, he is best known for murdering his wife in a fit of passion when he discovered her with another man. Following this, a consuming guilt caused him to live the rest of his life in solitude and self-hatred, a situation which likely contributed to his development of harmonies characterized by his contemporaries as deformed and monstrous. In fact, his style anticipated the developments of the Romantic era, equating intense chromaticism and jarring chord changes with overwhelming emotion. Gesualdo unsurprisingly tended to prefer the darkest texts for his compositions, making the *Tenebrae* texts a natural choice. In this motet, Gesualdo also borrowed techniques from his madrigal style, such as sudden changes in affect reflecting changes in the text. This is seen particularly at the text “You shall flee away,” when the music becomes suddenly fast and agitated.

Marc-Antoine Charpentier was among the leading composers of French Baroque music during the reign of Louis XIV. A master of both sacred vocal music and theater music, he composed a whole cycle of settings of the *Tenebrae* Responsories, fusing church styles with dramatic styles to illustrate the emotions present in the texts. *Tenebrae Factae Sunt*, for solo bass-baritone, alternates between narration of the events of Jesus’ death and direct quotations from Jesus as he is dying on the cross. The evocative setting is filled with text painting, beginning with the singer’s first notes—a descending *lamento* bass accompanying the text “darkness fell.”

“Jesum Tradidit Impius” is the third and final movement of Scottish composer James MacMillan’s *Tenebrae Responsories*. Like much of MacMillan’s choral music, it utilizes extremes of the range, unusual vocal timbres, and jagged melodic gestures and ornaments to build tension. The opening exclamation of “Jesum,” marked “anguished” in the score, returns at important moments throughout the piece, representing the horror of the onlookers who witness Jesus’ betrayal and death. In the middle of the piece, there is a section where the lower voices are instructed to “babble” the text in a muddled fashion, imitating the hushed meeting of the chief priests and scribes who choose to crucify Jesus. The piece ends with a haunting soprano solo, inspired by Scottish lament singing, telling how Peter followed the crucifixion procession at a distance “to see the end.”

My soul is athirst for God

Herbert Howells was an English composer and church musician of the 20th Century, known for his contribution to Anglican hymnody, anthems, and other liturgical music. As a composer of the generation after Vaughan Williams, he contributed to the nascent English church style, drawing inspiration from Tudor music and folk song. *Like as the Hart* sets an English translation of Psalm 42, which tells of an intense longing for God. Howells is often characterized as a neo-Romantic—a somewhat conservative composer compared to others of his time, but someone with a gift for expression. In this anthem, Howells uses the dark, warm harmonies produced by added flats, particularly the “bluesy” flat-3 scale degree, to depict the angst and sensuousness of the soul’s longing. *Like as the Hart* continues to be one of the most popular anthems in the

Anglican church today. Though the original accompaniment is for organ, today's version will be performed with an accompaniment orchestrated for strings by SMND doctoral graduate, Howard Eckdahl.

Dark night of the soul

The final piece on today's program, Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo's *Dark Night of the Soul*, sets mystical poetry by St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), a Spanish priest and writer. While today the phrase "dark night of the soul" might be thought of as a difficult period in one's life, whether a crisis of faith, a struggle with depression, or something else, John was referring to a period of "unselfing" before the final union with God. Though Gjeilo sets only the first three stanzas of John's poem, the rest of the poem goes on to describe the soul's union with God in terms of the bond between a lover and their beloved. Passing through the Dark Night and gaining an intimate relationship with the divine, the soul has been forever transformed. In Gjeilo's setting, a minimalistic opening section in 7/8 time serves to disorient the listener in a wash of sound and repetition, perhaps representing the darkness of God's unknowability. In a later section, Gjeilo particularly highlights the text, "Ah, the sheer grace," with dramatic chords and virtuosic piano writing that bursts forth from the texture, suggesting that the soul's overwhelming experience of grace is central to emerging from the Dark Night. Following this great emotional intensity, the piece, and our concert, ends in serenity—in the context of St. John of the Cross's poem, the ultimate union with God. The English text of this piece is a translation of the original Spanish.

Acknowledgments

I would not be where I am today without the help of numerous wonderful people who have taught, mentored, and cared about me. My thanks to Dr. Menk for all she has taught me this year (if you see me prepare a subdivision well, you have her to thank) and her role in making this recital happen. Thanks also to Dr. Doerries for his mentorship over the past two years, and Dr. Katsarelis for her teaching and her assistance with preparing string parts for this recital. I have huge gratitude and admiration for Ellis Anderson, who is a fabulous musician and whose artistry was a real help to me throughout this process. His great attitude and creativity, whether for the dense piano writing of Gjeilo or the extemporized *continuo* realization in the Baroque pieces, was a major contribution to this music's success. Thank you to all of the musicians who collaborated on this concert—your commitment to the music and consistent effort allowed us to execute some challenging repertoire. Your lending of your skills to this project of mine has been the greatest gift. Thanks to Janet Rudasics, Christine Trail, Carl Sporleder, Daniel Stein, and all administrative and technical staff who worked behind the scenes to help me put this concert on. Thanks are also due to past teachers who have helped make me the musician I am today: choral mentors Drs. James Armstrong and Jamie Bartlett, keyboard instructors Tom Marshall and Hope Armstrong Erb, and many more. Finally, thank you to my parents, who have been the most loving and supportive team I could ever ask for. I am grateful that you are my parents every day.

Texts and Translations

Magnificat Primo

Magnificat anima mea Dominum,
Et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari
meo;
Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae
suae.
Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes
generationes.
Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est,
Et sanctum nomen eius,
Et misericordia eius a progenie in progenies
timentibus eum.
Fecit potentiam in brachio suo;
Dispersit superbos mente
cordis sui;
Deposuit potentes de sede, et exultavit
humiles;
Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit
inanes.
Suscepit Israel puerum suum,
Recordatus misericordiae suae,
Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham
Et semini eius in saecula.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et
Spiritu Sancto,
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper:
Et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Tristis Est Anima Mea

Tristis est anima mea usque ad mortem;
Sustinete hic, et vigilate mecum.
Nunc videbitis turbam, quae circumdabit
me.
Vos fugam capietis,
Et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

*My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my
savior;
For He hath regarded the lowliness of his
handmaiden.
Behold, from henceforth all generations
shall call me blessed.
For He that is mighty hath magnified me,
And holy is His name,
And his mercy is on them that fear Him
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm;
He hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts;
He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek;
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich He hath sent empty away.
He remembering His mercy hath holpen His
servant Israel,
As He promised to our forefathers, Abraham
And his seed forever.*

*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and
to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever
shall be: World without end. Amen.*

-Book of Common Prayer (1662)

*Sorrowful is my soul, even unto death;
Stay you here, and watch with me.
Now you shall see a multitude, which will
surround me.
You shall flee away,
And I will go to be sacrificed for you.*

Ecce, appropinquat hora,
Et filius hominis tradetur in manus
peccatorum.
Vos fugam capietis,
Et ego vadam immolari pro vobis.

*Behold, the hour is at hand,
And the Son of Man will be betrayed into the
hands of sinners.
You shall flee away,
And I will go to be sacrificed for you.*

Tenebrae Factae Sunt

Tenebrae factae sunt,
Dum crucifixissent Jesum Judaei;
Et circa hora nonam,
Exclamavit Jesus voce magna:
“Deus meus, ut quid me dereliquisti?”
Et inclinato capite, emisit
spiritum.
Exclamans Jesus voce magna ait:
“Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum
meum.”
Et inclinato capite, emisit
spiritum.

*Darkness fell
When the Jews crucified Jesus;
And about the ninth hour,
Jesus cried out with a loud voice:
“My God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
And he bowed his head, and gave up the
ghost.
Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said:
“Father, into thy hands I commend my
spirit.”
And he bowed his head, and gave up the
ghost.*

Jesum Tradidit Impius

Jesum tradidit impius summis principibus
sacerdotum et senioribus populi.
Petrus autem sequebatur eum a longe,
Ut videret finem.
Adduxerunt autem eum ad Caiapham
principem sacerdotum,
Ubi scribae et pharisaei
convenerant.
Petrus autem sequebatur eum a longe,
Ut videret finem.

*The wicked man betrayed Jesus to the chief
priests and elders of the people.
But Peter followed him at a distance,
To see the end.
They led him to Caiaphas, the chief
priest,
Where the scribes and Pharisees were met
together.
But Peter followed him at a distance,
To see the end.*

Like as the Hart Desireth the Waterbrooks

Like as the hart desireth the waterbrooks,
So longeth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God.
When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?

My tears have been my meat day and night,
While they daily say unto me, "Where is now thy God?"

-Psalm 42, v. 1-3

Dark Night of the Soul

One dark night,
Filled with love's urgent longings,
- ah, the sheer grace! -
I went out unseen,
My house being now all stilled.

In darkness, and secure,
By the secret ladder, disguised,
- ah, the sheer grace! -
In darkness and concealment,
My house being now all stilled.

On that glad night,
In secret, for no one saw me,
Nor did I look at anything,
With no other light or guide
Than the one that burned in my heart.

-St. John of the Cross