

The background of the entire image is a dense field of small, heart-shaped confetti in various shades of pink and red. The hearts are scattered across the frame, with some in sharp focus in the foreground and others blurred in the background, creating a sense of depth and texture. The overall color palette is warm and romantic, dominated by pinks and reds.

13TH THE THIRTEEN

MATTHEW ROBERTSON ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

a word too small: love

FEBRUARY 9 - 11, 2019

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MATTHEW ROBERTSON | ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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CONCERT SCHEDULE

Saturday, February 9, 2019 | 7:30 PM

Live at 10th & G | First Congregational U.C.C.

945 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20001

Sunday, February 10, 2019 | 5:00PM

Bradley Hills Church

6601 Bradley Blvd. , Bethesda, MD 20817

Monday, February 11, 2019 | 7:30 PM

Hood College

Brodbeck Music Hall

501 Brodbeck Dr. Frederick, MD 21701

CONDUCTOR'S NOTE

Happy Valentine's Day! I'm so glad that you decided to join us tonight as we explore music of the heart.

The Thirteen believes that the art we make must be relevant to the society in which we live and foster empathy in our communities. Our 2018-2019 season, *the bonds between*, explores the theme of connection. Tonight's concert investigates this theme from the union of romantic love to the fraying of filial love, from chaste devotion to lustful hands 'wandering up and down.'

In planning this concert, I was inspired by the *art song* tradition – a tradition that stretches as far back as Monteverdi, through Brahms, Mahler, and Barber; a tradition that continues to the present day. Much of this varied repertoire was written for a handful of performers making music in their living rooms, often around a piano. This intimate vision inspired every part of this concert, from the personnel utilized to the repertoire chosen.

I also wanted to present a vision of love that is more kaleidoscopic than the typical greeting card sentiment: while it rings true, the stereotypical vision of romantic love is only one aspect of this powerful emotion. I hope that tonight's concert encourages our capacity for caring: for our neighbors, for 'the other,' for our environment, and for those closest to us.

–Matthew Robertson

We invite you to take photographs (without flash) and to use social media during the concert.

We politely decline unauthorized audio or video recordings of our concerts.

Please silence all cell phones and other noisemaking devices.

ROSTER

Katelyn Aungst, soprano

Julie Bosworth, soprano

Brian Ming Chu, baritone

Doug Dodson, countertenor

Andrew Fuchs, tenor

Nathan Hodgson, tenor

Caroline Olsen, mezzo-soprano

Jonathan Woody, baritone

Matthew Robertson, Artistic Director

Valerie Simonsen, Operations Manager

Daya Deuskar, Assistant Conductor

The Thirteen gratefully thanks our

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PROGRAM

Sfogava con le stelle

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643)

and the swallow

Mid-Atlantic Premiere

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

You Are My Brother

World Premiere

Scott Ordway (b. 1984)

Letter to my father; No. IV from *Coloring Book*

Ted Hearne (b. 1982)

Erinnerung

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911), arr. Clytus Gottwald (b. 1925)

Sure on This Shining Night; Op. 13, No.3

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

O schöne Nacht; Op. 92, No. 1

Johannes Brahms (1833 - 1897)

Ballade to the Moon

Daniel Elder (b. 1986)

Love/Light; from *This is How you Love*

East Coast Premiere

Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980) and Timothy C. Takach (b. 1978)

The Coolin; from *Reincarnations*, Op. 16, No. 3

S. Barber

This Marriage

Washington, D.C. Premiere

Ed Newton-Rex (b. 1987)

Fair Phyllis I saw

John Farmer (c. 1570–c. 1601)

Sfogava con le stelle

C. Monteverdi

Monteverdi's *Sfogava con le stelle* is an impassioned setting of an earlier solo work of the same name by Monteverdi's contemporary, Giulio Caccini. Monteverdi pioneered the style *seconda prattica*, in which text and its expression is the most important musical element. The adoption of the *seconda prattica* marked the transition into the Baroque period, creating opportunities for more dramatic, textually-driven expressions in vocal music.

Sfogava con le stelle	<i>A lovesick man was</i>
un infermo d'amore	<i>venting to the stars</i>
sotto notturno cielo il suo dolore.	<i>his grief, under the night sky.</i>
E dicea fisso in loro:	<i>And staring at them he said:</i>
"O imagini belle	<i>"O beautiful images</i>
de l'idol mio ch'adoro,	<i>of my idol whom I adore,</i>
si com'a me mostrate	<i>just as you are showing me</i>
mentre così splendete	<i>her rare beauty</i>
la sua rara beltate,	<i>while you sparkle so well,</i>
così mostraste a lei	<i>so also demonstrate to her</i>
i vivi ardori miei:	<i>my living ardor:</i>
la fareste col vostr'aureo sembiante	<i>by your golden appearance you'd make her</i>
pietosa sì come me fate amante."	<i>compassionate, just as you make me loving."</i>

and the swallow

C. Shaw

Using the 84th psalm as inspiration, *and the swallow* was commissioned by Lincoln Center's 2017 festival, The Psalms Experience, to reflect on the principles of justice, faith, gratitude, and lamentation. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Caroline Shaw confides with the listener her intention to draw attention to the Syrian refugee crisis, writing, "I really identified with [Psalm 84] because it has to do with finding a home and finding a refuge and a place and sort of celebrating this sense of safety... there's a yearning for a home that feels very relevant today."

how beloved is your dwelling place,
o lord of hosts
my soul yearns, faints,
my heart and flesh cry out

the sparrow found a house,
and the swallow, her nest,
where she may
raise her young

they pass through the valley of bakka
they make it a place of springs
the autumn rains also cover it
with pools

You Are My Brother

S. Ordway

You Are My Brother (2019) utilizes an original text based on the Book of Genesis to imagine a love that must have existed between Cain and Abel in the early years of their lives.

The two brothers function as archetypal siblings in western culture, with Cain as the progenitor of human conflict and violence. But each represents a second archetype as well: Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. These contrasting ways of life evoke distinct relationships to the landscape, to the family, and to society. They represent several other beautiful opposites as well: stability and movement, permanence and impermanence, plants and animals, community and solitude, security and freedom, and what the Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan describes as "place and space."

But the shepherd's and farmer's vocations converge again in that they both ultimately care for other living beings, and are in some sense rooted in love. In this way, the differences that separate the brothers—and ultimately lead to tragedy—are inseparable from the affection that binds them together. This short piece dwells on the warmth and trust that must have been present, to some degree, but are not typically conjured by the fable's infamous crime. Our deep collective knowledge of this ultimate outcome colors how we hear the work's jubilant outcry of love and its restful, embracing conclusion.

Program note by the composer

Abel was a keeper of sheep,
While Cain turned the ground.

In time it came to pass
That Cain brought up the fruit
Of all the earth itself
(So humbly as a gift)
To save a famished God.

"You are my brother,
And you are my brother."

Letter to my father

T. Hearne

Described as a “tough edge,” composer, singer, and bandleader Ted Hearne draws on a wide breath of influences to create “topical... sharpened-edged works” (New York Times). His racially charged *Coloring Book* is a cycle of five songs derived from texts by African American poets including Zora Neale Hurston, Claudia Rankine, and James Baldwin. In *Letter to my father*, Hearne sets text from Hurston's 1928 essay “How It Feels To Be Colored Me,” beginning with rhythmically driving discord, through folk-like sonorities, finally arriving at a celestial conclusion.

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

Erinnerung

G. Mahler, arr. C. Gottwald

Erinnerrung, translated as "Remembrance," was originally part of a set of five *Lieder* for solo voice and piano written in 1889 during Mahler's time in Budapest. German arranger Clytus Gottwald offers, "...In the middle of preparations for the first performance of his first symphony, [Mahler] still found time to compose several *Lieder*, including *Erinnerung*, which was composed, rehearsed, and polished just one day before its debut performance by Italian soprano Bianca Bianchi, with Mahler himself at the piano. The work thrives on the use of 'harmony of sighs,' the seemingly endless play with suspensions, often generating painful dissonances."

Es wecket meine Liebe die Lieder immer wieder;
Es wecken meine Lieder die Liebe immer wieder.

*My love inspires songs again and again;
My songs inspire love again and again.*

Die Lippen, die da träumen von deinen heißen Küssen,
In Sang und Liedesweisen von dir sie tönen müssen.

*The lips that dream of your ardent kisses
In song and melody. They must sing of you*

Und wollen die Gedanken der Liebe sich entschlagen,
So kommen meine Lieder zu mir mit Liebesklagen!

*And if my thoughts seek to banish love,
My songs return, lamenting love!*

So halten mich in Banden die Beiden immer wieder:
Es weckt das Lied die Liebe, die Liebe weckt die Lieder.

*So both hold me captive forever in chains,
Songs inspire love, love inspires songs.*

Sure on This Shining Night

S. Barber

Setting texts by the American poet James Agee, *Sure on This Shining Night* has, since its inception, become a paragon of the neo-Romantic American art song. Having originally composed it for solo voice and piano, Barber later arranged it for choir, providing additional layers of color and textual nuance. Juxtaposing added moments of imitative polyphony against the rich, shifting harmonies, Barber creates a sense of limitless space as voice layers upon voice.

Sure on this shining night
Of starmade shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.

The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.

Sure on this shining night
I weep for wonder
Wandering far alone
Of shadows on the stars.

O schöne Nacht

J. Brahms

Beginning with a flourish from the lowest and earthiest notes of the piano which then rise to twinkling chords in its upper registers, *O schöne Nacht* immediately announces itself as programmatic. Composed no later than 1877 for four solo voices and piano, *O schöne Nacht* draws upon a secular theme popular in the pan-German Romantic era: the conjoining of nature and love.

O schöne Nacht
am Himmel märchenhaft erglänzt der Mond in seiner ganzen Pracht;
Um ihn der kleinen Sterne liebliche Genossenschaft.

O schöne Nacht
Es schimmert hell der Tau am grünen Halm;
Mit Macht im Fliederbusche schlägt die Nachtigall.
Der Knabe schleicht zu seiner Liebsten sacht.
O schöne Nacht!

Oh beautiful night!
The moon is fabulously shining in its complete splendor in the sky;
Around it, sweet company of little stars.
Oh beautiful night!
The dew is shimmering brightly on the green blades of grass;
The nightingale sings ardently in the lilac bush, and
The youth steals softly to his lover.
Oh beautiful night!

Ballade to the Moon

D. Elder

Ballade to the Moon is the first in a cycle of nocturnes for mixed chorus and piano, exploring both observational and psychological experiences associated with love, nature, darkness and light. Each text is original and approaches these ideas in different ways - *Ballade* depicts a narrator's moonlit walk through woods and fields as he explores his love for everything around him. The beauty comes in its obscurity, as at many times the narrator could be referring to either nature or a romantic attraction in his life. The night seems to call to him, "Come, dream in me!" and as he finds himself under deep forest cover, he entreats the stars, "O share thy light!" until the twinkling stars in open meadow gleam upon him, inviting them to "Come, sing with me!" His love for the dusky beauty around him causes him to "weep with joy" with the moon as his only witness.

Program note by the composer

On moonlit night I wander free, my mind to roam on thoughts of thee.
With midnight darkness beckoning my heart toward mystic fantasy:
Come, dream in me!
How beautiful, this night in June, And here, upon the velvet dune;
I weep with joy beneath the moon.

The path lies dark before my sight, And yet, my feet with pure delight
trod onward through the blackened vale beneath the starry sky so bright.
O, share thy light!
These woods, their weary wanderer soon in awe and fearful wonder swoon;
I weep with joy beneath the moon.

And as the darkened hours flee, my heart beats ever rapidly.
Though heavy hang my eyes with sleep, my singing soul, it cries to thee:
Come, sing with me!
The twinkling sky casts forth its tune—O, must I leave thy charms so soon?
I weep with joy beneath the moon.

Love/Light

J. Hagen and T. Takach

Utilizing texts from e.e. cumming's "silently if, out of not knowable" and words inspired by the mystic poet Hafiz, *Love/Light* is the eleventh movement from *This is How You Love*, a collaboration between composers and life partners, Jocelyn Hagen and Timothy Takach. The composers write: "The piece was commissioned with the idea that it would be... a dialogue between lovers. As we formed the libretto we decided to take out all instances of gender pronouns, and just have it be between 'you' and 'I.'" *Love/Light* sets two chorales, with respective texts by Cummings and Hafiz, which then combine to form a new dialogue.

yours is the light by which my spirit's born:
yours is the darkness of my soul's return
you are my sun, my moon, and all my stars.

Even after all these years,
the Sun never says
to the Earth
"You owe Me."
Look what happens—
with a Love
like that,
it lights
the whole
sky.

The Coolin

S. Barber

The final movement from his triptych *Reincarnations*, *The Coolin* takes its name from the curly lock of hair at the nape of the neck, which became a common nickname for a loved one as early as the thirteenth century. When recounting his inspiration for the original poem, poet James Stephens writes: "I sought to represent that state which is almost entirely a condition of dream, wherein the passion of love has almost overreached itself..." Barber seems to have taken him at his word, creating music that is tender, intimate, and luxuriant.

Come with me, under my coat,
And we will drink our fill
Of the milk of the white goat,
Or wine if it be thy will.
And we will talk until talk is a trouble too,
Out on the side of the hill;
And nothing is left to do,
But an eye to look into an eye,
And a hand in a hand to slip;
And a sigh to answer a sigh;
And a lip to find out a lip!

What if the night be black,
Or the air on the mountain chill,
Where all but the fern is still!
Stay with me, under my coat,
And we will drink our fill
Of the milk of the white goat,
Out on the side of the hill!

This Marriage

Ed Newton-Rex

This Marriage sets a poem of the 12th century Sufi mystic, Jalal ad-Din Rumi, in which love and devotion are intertwined through depictions of earthly marriage and celestial grace. Newton-Rex's setting, first performed at the 2011 British Royal Wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton, uses luscious chord clusters and suspensions to impart passion and peace.

May these vows and this marriage be blessed.
 May it be sweet milk,
 like wine and halvah.
May this marriage offer fruit and shade
 like the date palm.
May this marriage be full of laughter,
 our every day a day in paradise.
May this marriage be a sign of compassion,
 a seal of happiness here and hereafter.
May this marriage have a fair face and a good name,
an omen as welcomes the moon in a clear blue sky.
 I am out of words to describe
 how spirit mingles in this marriage.

Fair Phyllis

John Farmer

While seemingly innocent upon first read, the Elizabethan madrigal *Fair Phyllis*, is filled with double entendres. Farmer builds dramatic interest with imitative polyphony on the words "up and down," giving a sense of rapid motion and two distinctive voices engaged in dialogue. Each voice moves so nimbly that the once subtle raunchiness becomes quite palpable – a move guaranteed to make the listener blush.

Fair Phyllis I saw sitting all alone
Feeding her flock near to the mountainside.
The shepherds knew not whither she was gone,
 But after her lover Amyntas hied.
Up and down he wandered, whilst she was missing;
When he found her, O then they fell a-kissing.

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ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Hailed as singing with “striking color and richness” (The Washington Post), and praised for “a tight and attractive vocal blend and excellent choral discipline” (American Record Guide), **THE THIRTEEN** is an all-star professional choir known for inspired and powerful live performance. Since its founding in 2012, the choir has been at the forefront of bringing invigorating performances to the American choral community in repertoire ranging from the Renaissance to the Romantic, from Bach to Bruckner; and from Gregorian chant to the world premieres of new American composers.

The Thirteen draws its artists from among the finest ensembles in the world, including Chanticleer, Seraphic Fire, Apollo's Fire, Conspirare, I Fagiolini, Opera Philadelphia, Boston Early Music Festival and Trinity Wall Street. The choir's peerless singers are best described by National Public Radio commentator M.D. Ridge: "to talk about the remarkable abilities and sound of the individual singers would... be like trying to say which whitecaps on the ocean reflect the sun most beautifully, or which leaves on a tree dance most gracefully with the wind... I stand in awe."

The Thirteen's growing discography includes "Voice Eternal," the critically-acclaimed Christmas album "Snow on Snow," "RADIANT DARK," which features the finest works of the late Tudor period and reached #28 on the iTunes Classical Charts, as well as The Thirteen's debut recording "...to St. Cecilia." In 2018 The Thirteen was awarded the Greater Washington Area Choral Excellence award for Most Creative Programming.

In past seasons, The Thirteen has performed and been in residency at Yale University, Bowling Green State University, Eastern Illinois University, the University of Central Oklahoma, York College, The University of Tampa, Virginia Wesleyan University, St. Ambrose University, Southern Illinois University – Carbondale, Guilford College, as well as concerts throughout the United States. The Thirteen is committed to educating and inspiring the next generation of musicians, and frequently coaches students at the high school and collegiate levels in masterclass, workshop and collaborative performance sessions.

For more information about The Thirteen, please visit www.TheThirteenChoir.org

HOST A MUSICIAN!

Did you know that many of The Thirteen's musicians are drawn from around the country and come to Washington for rehearsals and concerts? When they come to D.C. they need a place to stay! To help save on costs and interact with our community, The Thirteen asks you, our audience members, to consider opening your homes to our wonderful musicians. Hosts are asked to provide a private bedroom for a full concert week and are offered two free tickets to one of our concerts in thanks!!

For more information please speak with Operations Manager, Valerie Simonsen, at tonight's concert, or send her an email at valerie@thethirteenchoir.org. Thanks for your support of The Thirteen!





MATTHEW ROBERTSON, praised for his “sensitive and nuanced” conducting, is acclaimed as the driving force behind the all-star professional choir, The Thirteen, and is hailed as a leader in the field. As Founder and Artistic Director of The Thirteen, he has conducted the ensemble throughout the United States and on multiple recordings.

Robertson's 2018-2019 with The Thirteen sees fifteen performances, repertoire spanning more than half of a millennium, collaborations with REBEL Baroque Orchestra and Jeremy Filsell, and numerous world and regional premieres. Robertson will lead residencies at Hood College, St. John's College, McDaniel College and more. Highlights of his 2018-2019 season include performances of J.S. Bach's *St. John Passion*, Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Poulenc's *Figure Humaine*, David Lang's *the little match girl passion*, and much of J.S. Bach's oeuvre. Mr. Robertson will serve as a guest clinician throughout the East Coast and collaborate with many of the finest musicians of his generation, including members of the Metropolitan Opera, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, Seraphic Fire, Apollo's Fire, Trinity Wall Street, Opera Philadelphia, Washington National Opera and more.

During the 2017-2018 season, Robertson led performances of masterworks including Handel's *Messiah* and Brahms' *Requiem*, served as a presenter at ACDA's Voices United festival, and led workshops throughout the East Coast. Additionally, Robertson served on the faculty of Oberlin Conservatory's Baroque Performance Institute, a premiere summer institute and festival dedicated to music of the Baroque.

From 2010-2012 Robertson served as Assistant Conductor for the Westminster Symphonic Choir, conducting the choir in performance and assisting in preparation for concerts with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, for such conductors as Yannick Nezet-Seguin, Peter Schreier, Alan Gilbert and Jacques Lacombe. Mr. Robertson was the Robert P. Fountain Scholar at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, earning a degree in Organ Performance. While at the Oberlin Conservatory he conducted the Oberlin College Choir, College Singers, Musical Union, Conservatory Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra. Robertson received his M.Mus. in conducting from Westminster Choir College where he studied with Andrew Megill and Joe Miller. He has also worked with such luminary conductors as Norman Scribner, Stan Engebretson, Robert Spano, Joseph Flummerfelt, Gary Graden and JoAnn Falletta.

A Washington, DC native, Robertson serves as Director of Music at Bradley Hills Church, in Bethesda, MD, and serves as a board member of the Washington, DC Chapter of the American Choral Director's Association. Additionally active as an organist, Mr. Robertson has performed throughout the United States and in Western Europe.

HELP MAKE OUR NEW CD POSSIBLE

The Thirteen is excited to announce we'll be recording a new CD this May with the record label *Acis*. We look forward to featuring the world premiere recording of *absalom* by acclaimed American composer Daniel Elder.

But we need your help! Even when you're working with a label, CDs are expensive, often costing upwards of \$20,000! All donations of \$100 will receive a complimentary, pre-release CD! To donate, speak with one of The Thirteen tonight, visit www.TheThirteenChoir.org, or send a check to:

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