# SEATTLE PRO MUSICA KAREN P. THOMAS, CONDUCTOR

# My heart be brave

## Guest composer, Marques L. A. Garrett

October 15, 2022

Welcome to *My heart be brave*, the first concert of our 50th anniversary season! We're delighted to welcome you to this inaugural event in our year of celebration—the first of our five-concert "New American Composer Series."

This year, we celebrate our 50th anniversary by looking forward to our next 50 years, even as we remember our history. In this spirit of re-imagining the future of choral music, we have commissioned five exciting young composers to write new works for our anniversary. Tonight, we feature Marques L. A. Garrett, with a performance of four of his choral works, complemented by pieces by Lili Boulanger, Rosephanye Powell, Samuel Barber, Joel Thompson, Jonathan Quick, and Pärt Uusberg.

We've enjoyed having Marques in Seattle this past week to work with the singers of Seattle Pro Musica, and to share his knowledge and talent with students in the Greater Seattle area via our Education and Engagement Program.

We are certain you will enjoy hearing Marques's music, as well as his insights about his compositional process and the place of new choral music in the world today. Please join us for a meet-and-greet following the concert!

Composer, singer, and educator **Marques L. A. Garrett** teaches at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before earning his PhD in Music Education (Choral Conducting) at Florida State University, he was the Director of Choral Activities at Cheyney University of Pennsylvania. Additionally, he holds an MM from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and a BA from Hampton University.

An active conductor, Dr. Garrett is the artistic director of the Omaha Symphonic Chorus and founding conductor of the Nebraska Festival Singers. He serves as a guest conductor or clinician with school, church, community, and festival/honor choirs throughout the country. With a versatile voice that allows him to perform both as a baritone and countertenor, Dr. Garrett has sung with several community, church, and university groups as both a chorister and soloist. Currently, he sings with First-Plymouth Congregational Church, Festival Singers of Florida, and the Jason Max Ferdinand Singers.



His extensive research into the non-idiomatic choral music of Black composers is creating more opportunities for performances of music by these artists. His lectures at state and regional conferences of the American Choral Directors Association and at other local and national venues afford him the opportunity to showcase this underrepresented body of music.

For his Seattle Pro Musica commissioned work, Marques has chosen a text by the Black American poet Paul Laurence Dunbar, with its evocative text asking to "teach this tongue the singer's soulful art."

### **SEATTLE PRO MUSICA KAREN P. THOMAS, CONDUCTOR**

# My heart be brave

## Guest composer, Marques L. A. Garrett **New American Composers Series**

October 15, 2022 | Seattle First Baptist Church

#### CHROMA

Soprano-Alto Ensemble

Mis on inimene

Pärt Uusberg (b. 1986)

Set to the poem by Doris Kareva, this atmospheric work asks the question "What is human?" Sung in Estonian.

#### ORPHEON

Tenor-Bass Ensemble

**Loch Lomond** 

Jonathan Quick (b. 1970), arranger

"The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond" is a well-loved traditional Scottish song first published in 1841. Sung in English.

#### V O X

Mixed-Voice Ensemble

The coolin

Samuel Barber (1910–1981)

The word coolin or cooleen refers to a little, very special curl that grows exactly in the middle of the back of the neck, and refers to one's sweetheart. Sung in English.

**Hold fast to dreams** 

Joel Thompson (b. 1988)

The composer writes: "My hope is that all who experience this piece will put aside our jaded lenses of fear and choose to be vulnerable and continue to dream." Sung in English.

#### SEATTLE PRO MUSICA

My heart be brave

Margues L. A. Garrett (b. 1984)

"In the midst of discrimination, our heart—the core of our being—must lead us into rightful change. And as we continue doing right, the principles of honesty, love, and justice will give us the power to strive for what is due all of humanity." Sung in English.

Madrigal Commissioned by Seattle Pro Musica for our 50th Anniversary Season. The **WORLD PREMIERE** poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar summons love to "teach this tongue the

Marques L. A. Garrett singer's soulful art."

Rosephanye Powell (b. 1962)

Sung in English.

To sit and dream These words from a poem by Langston Hughes invite us to reach toward

dreams of a better world and a more just society.

Sung in English.

Till I wake One movement from Five Songs of Laurence Hope, settings for voice Marques L. A. Garrett

and piano by Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949), here arranged for chorus by

Marques L. A. Garrett. Sung in English.

Hymne au soleil An impressionistic paean to the rising sun by this gifted composer who

Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) died at the age of 24.

Sung in French.

"Let joy come from deep within, from the assurance that who you are is Sing out, my soul

Marques L. A. Garrett enough. Because of that, you can sing your song of joy."

Sung in English.

#### **OUR MISSION**

To enrich and inspire our audiences, singers, and community through the experience of choral artistry, and to increase access to and appreciation of choral music.

#### OUR STATEMENT ON CULTURAL EQUITY

Everyone deserves equal access to a full and vibrant creative life, and this access is essential to a free and healthy society. To support the creative life of our community, Seattle Pro Musica commits to policies and practices of cultural equity that foster equal access, inclusion, and justice.

We recognize cultural equity as a framework of values, policies, and practices that ensures arts institutions serve the needs of all people, especially those who have historically been underserved based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, size, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion.

As we pursue our artistic mission, we will hold ourselves accountable to cultural equity. By acknowledging and challenging inequities, both as an individual arts organization and in partnership with others, we can and will make change happen.

These performances are supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtsFund, ArtsWA, Chorus America, 4Culture, Classical KING FM 98.1, and the City of Seattle, Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs.

Please mute all cell phones and electronic devices. No photography during performances. Thank you.

## Program notes, texts, and translations

**Pärt Uusberg** is an Estonian composer, conductor, and actor. He grew up singing in children and youth choirs, and founded the chamber choir Head Ööd, Vend. *Mis on inimene*, set to a poem by Estonian poet, writer, and translator Doris Kareva, asks the question "What is human?" Uusberg creates an ambient soundscape for this peaceful work exploring the human experience on a deep level.

#### Mis on inimene

Mis on inimene? What is human?

Kas ingli vari? The shadow of an angel?

Või igatsushüüd hingeühtsuse poole? Or a cry of yearning towards a union of souls?

Igaüks meist on pill, Each of us a pipe

läbi mille võrratuid viise vilistab Jumala tuul: For God's wind to whistle:

hoia, küll siis hoitakse sind.

Take care, then you are cared for.

"The Bonnie Banks o' Loch Lomond," or simply **Loch Lomond**, is a well-known traditional Scottish song first published in 1841 in Vocal Melodies of Scotland. Loch Lomond is the largest Scottish loch, or lake, located between the counties of Dunbartonshire and Stirlingshire. There are many interpretations of the story—one of the most enduring describes how two of Bonnie Prince Charlie's men were captured and left behind in Carlisle after the failed rising of 1745. One young soldier was to be executed, the other released. The spirit of the dead soldier travelling by the "low road" would reach Scotland before his comrade, who would be struggling along the actual road over high, rugged country.

#### **Loch Lomond**

By yon bonnie banks an' by yon bonnie braes Whaur the sun shines bright on Loch Lomond Whaur me an' my true love were ever wont tae gae On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'.

Chorus: O ye'll tak' the high road, and Ah'll tak' the low road And Ah'll be in Scotlan' afore ye But me an' my true love will ne-er meet again On the bonnie, bonnie banks o' Loch Lomon'.

'Twas there that we perted in yon shady glen
On the steep, steep sides o' Ben Lomon'
Whaur in deep purple hue, the hielan hills we view
An' the moon comin' oot in the gloamin'.
Chorus

The wee birdies sing an' the wild flouers spring
An' in sunshine the waters are sleeping
But the broken heart, it kens nae second spring again
An the world knows not how we are grieving.
Chorus

**Samuel Barber** has made one of the greatest contributions to vocal music of any contemporary American composer. His aunt was a well-known contralto, Louise Homer; his uncle Sydney Homer was a composer of vocal music; and Barber himself was a trained baritone who briefly pursued a singing career while still in his early twenties. His works for voice include operas, choral music, and numerous songs for solo voice and piano; his compositional style is decidedly tonal and lyrical. Barber said of his own approach to composing for the voice: "When I'm writing music for words, then I immerse myself in those words, and I let the music flow out of them." Composed in 1940 to a poem by the Irish poet James Stephens, *The Coolin* is the third movement of Barber's choral cycle *Reincarnations*. The word coolin or cooleen refers to a little, very special curl that grows exactly in the middle of the back of the neck of a girl. That term, "little curl" or "cooleen" came to mean one's sweetheart.

#### The Coolin

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! And 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.

Emmy Award–winning composer **Joel Thompson** is a composer, pianist, conductor, and educator from Atlanta.

#### Of *Hold fast to dreams*, Thompson writes:

"These words of Langston Hughes have proven their immortality this year in American history, and not in the way one would hope. The 1951 poem *Harlem* still captures the essence of disillusionment in a deceptively simple series of vivid questions. *Dreams*, a lesser-known poem, charges the reader to 'hold fast to dreams' while making plain the misery of a life without them. One poem summarizes the pain of broken promises and the other encourages faith that things will get better because the alternative is absolute despair... When asked to write a piece in response to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s 'I have a dream' speech, the possibility of dialogue between these succinct literary gems was an instant inspiration to me. Today's rampant cynicism casts Hughes' words in a tired light—these sentiments seem to be the stuff of childhood and naiveté—but my hope is that all who experience this piece will put aside our jaded lenses of fear and choose to be vulnerable and continue to dream."

#### **Hold fast to dreams**

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up

like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore—

And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over—

like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags

like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Hold fast to dreams For if dreams die

Life is a broken-winged bird

That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams For when dreams go Life is a barren field Frozen with snow.

My heart be brave and Madrigal are by Marques L. A. Garrett (bio on page 1).

The composer writes:

"Dr. Anthony Trecek-King requested a song that aligned with the social justice theme of his concerts with [the choir] Seraphic Fire. The first and last lines of the Johnson poem immediately stood out to me. In the midst of discrimination, our heart—the core of our being—must lead us into rightful change. And as we continue doing right, the principles of honesty, love, and justice will give us the power to strive for what is due all of humanity."

#### My heart be brave

My heart be brave, and do not falter so,
Nor utter more that deep, despairing wail.
Thy way is very dark and drear I know,
But do not let thy strength and courage fail;
For certain as the raven-winged night
Is followed by the bright and blushing morn,
Thy coming morrow will be clear and bright;
'Tis darkest when the night is furthest worn.
Look up, and out, beyond, surrounding clouds,
And do not in thine own gross darkness grope,
Rise up, and casting off thy hind'ring shrouds,
Cling thou to this, and ever inspiring hope:
Tho' thick the battle and tho' fierce the fight,
There is a power [in] making for the right.

*Madrigal* by Marques L. A. Garrett is the first of five new works commissioned by Seattle Pro Musica, in honor of our 50th anniversary. Garrett chose a poem by the American poet, novelist, and playwright Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906), who was one of the first influential Black poets in American literature. The deeply-passionate love poetry of *Madrigal* also references the "soulful art" of singing, making it the perfect text to inaugurate Seattle Pro Musica's 50th Anniversary Season.

#### Madrigal

Dream days of fond delight and hours As rosy-hued as dawn, are mine. Love's drowsy wine, Brewed from the heart of Passion flowers, Flows softly o'er my lips And save thee, all the world is in eclipse.

There were no light if thou wert not;
The sun would be too sad to shine,
And all the line
Of hours from dawn would be a blot;
And Night would haunt the skies,
An unlaid ghost with staring dark-ringed eyes.

Oh, love, if thou wert not my love,
And I perchance not thine—what then?
Could gift of all
Or favor of the God above,
Plant aught in this bare heart
Or teach this tongue the singer's soulful art?
Ah, no! 'Tis love, and love alone

That spurs my soul so surely on;
Turns night to dawn,
And thorns to roses fairest blown;
And winter drear to spring—
Oh, were it not for love I could not sing!

**Rosephanye Powell's** music is characterized by beautiful melodies, strong rhythmic emphasis, and rich harmonies, often derived from African American popular styles. She serves as Professor of Voice at Auburn University, and her research has focused on the art of the African American spiritual and the art songs of William Grant Still. In 2009, Dr. Powell received the "Living Legend Award" presented by California State University African Diaspora Sacred Music Festival in Los Angeles.

"To sit and dream, to sit and read, to sit and learn about the world"—these words from a poem by Langston Hughes invite us to reach toward dreams of a better world and a more just society.

#### To sit and dream

To sit and dream, to sit and read,
To sit and learn about the world
Outside our world of here and nowOur problem worldTo dream of vast horizons of the soul
Through dreams made whole,
Unfettered free-help me!
All you who are dreamers, too,
Help me to make our world anew.
I reach out my hand to you.

**Laurence Hope** was the pseudonym of the British poet Adela Florence Nicolson (1865–1904). She lived in India for a number of years and published a collection in 1901, Garden of Karma, which was released in the US as *India's Love Lyrics*.

*Till I wake* is one movement from *Five Songs of Laurence Hope*, settings for voice and piano by Harry T. Burleigh (1866–1949), here arranged for chorus by Marques L. A. Garrett. Of *Till I wake*, the composer writes:

"Five Songs of Laurence Hope sets two poems from India's Love Lyrics...Burleigh's legacy rests with the fact that he sang Negro spirituals to Antonin Dvořák and then, later, was among the first composers to set spirituals as art songs...With the publication of these choral arrangements of Burleigh's songs, I am hopeful that some light will be shed on the 70+ original art songs he composed in addition to his song cycles."

#### Till I wake

When I am dying, lean over me tenderly, softly...
Stoop, as the yellow roses droop
In the wind from the South;
So I may when I wake - if there be an awakening Keep what lulled me to sleep The touch of your lips on my mouth.

Lili Boulanger grew up in a musical environment: her father was an opera composer and voice teacher, and composer Gabriel Fauré was a regular visitor to their home. Her elder sister Nadia, a composer who was to become one of the most renowned composition teachers of the century, supervised Lili's musical education. Lili studied at the Paris Conservatoire, and at the young age of 19, was the first woman ever to win the highly competitive Prix de Rome composition prize. Lili wrote prolifically, in spite of constant illness (tuberculosis and cancer), and died at the age of 24. Her style is impressionistic, with its use of parallel chords, chromaticism, and occasional polytonality. Her compositional models were Fauré, Wagner, and Debussy; the latter is said to have held her writing in great esteem.

#### Hymne au soleil

Du soleil qui renaît bénissons la puissance. Avec tout l'univers célébrons son retour. Couronné de splendeur, il se lève, il s'élance. Le réveil de la terre est un hymne d'amour. Sept coursiers qu'en partant le Dieu contient à peine, Enflamment l'horizon de leur brûlante haleine.

O soleil fécond, tu parais! Avec ses champs en fleurs, ses monts, ses bois épais, La vaste mer de tes feux embrasée, L'univers plus jeune et plus frais, Des vapeurs de matin sont brillants de rosée.

#### Hymn to the sun

Let us bless the power of the reborn sun. With all the universe let us celebrate its return. Crowned with splendor, it rises, it soars. The waking of the earth is a hymn of love. Seven rushing steeds that the God scarcely holds back Ignite the horizon with their scorching breath.

Oh, vivid sun, you appear! With its fields in bloom, its mountains, its thick forests, The vast sea set ablaze by your fires, The universe, younger and fresher, With morning vapors are glistening with dew.

#### **Sing out, my soul** is by **Margues L. A. Garrett** (bio on page 1).

The composer writes: "The opening line of the poem by William Henry Davies calls out to our souls to sing. While there are many things about which we can be happy, these days of heavy social media involvement and constant comparisons to other people require that we remind ourselves that it is not the outside that matters. The inside—our hearts, minds, and soul—is who we are. Let joy come from deep within, from the assurance that who you are is enough. Because of that, you can sing your song of joy."

#### Sing out, my soul

Sing out, my soul, your songs of joy; Sing as a happy bird will sing Beneath a rainbow's lovely arch In early spring.

Think not of death, Strive not for gold, Train up your mind to feel content, What matters then how low your store? What we enjoy, and not possess, Makes rich or poor.

Sing out my soul...

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Dwight Beckmeyer is one of Seattle's most versatile musicians, performing in the musical theater, choral, symphonic, jazz, gospel, and collaborative recital worlds, including frequent appearances with the Seattle Symphony, and more than 50 musical theatre productions with the 5th Avenue, Paramount, and Village Theaters. Dwight has toured to Johannesburg with Lee Oskar and Friends, and to Europe, Japan, and South America with The Northwest Girlchoir. Presently, he is the collaborative pianist for Seattle Pro Musica and University Unitarian Church.



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We're thrilled to have you in our audience, and we thank you for considering a deeper relationship with us. We look forward to welcoming you into our giving family!

### We thank these generous Fund-a-Dream donors from our 2019 Auction. Their donations will help to fund the costs associated with our presentation of Ethel Smyth's Mass in D and the Mozart "Great" Mass in C minor in May 2023.

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### **Seattle Pro Musica's Education and Engagement Program**

Seattle Pro Musica seeks to inspire singers and audiences of the future. For our 50th anniversary season (2022–2023), we have commissioned five composers to write new works for us, and to be in residence in Seattle for their premieres. As part of this program, the composers will lead workshops with student choral musicians, ranging from primary school through college. Melissa Dunphy, Jerod Impichchaachaaha'Tate, Saunder Choi, Marques L. A. Garrett, and Shruthi Rajasekar will visit schools in the Greater Seattle area throughout the season, leading experiences for students that allow for intentional cultural exchange, demonstrative and hands-on workshops, and group singing. The participating students and their parents will be invited to SPM's "New American Composer Series" concerts at no cost.

Additionally, we will create opportunities for our audiences to meet and engage with the five composers at our concerts this season. Each of our "New American Composer Series" concerts will include a pre-concert talk with the composer, audience members, and SPM Artistic Director Karen P. Thomas. Following the concerts, we will hold a "Meet & Greet" for audience members and the composer in residence.

Each of the five composers you will hear this season has a specialized area of expertise in addition to their work as composers:

- Marques L. A. Garrett has done extensive research on traditional music of the African diaspora, as well as contemporary choral music by Black composers.
- Melissa Dunphy's compositional work focuses on themes of social justice and gender equality.
- Shruthi Rajasekar is a performer of traditional Indian Carnatic (Southern India) music, and composes music influenced by Carnatic traditions.
- Saunder Choi's specialties include Filipino choral music, both folk traditions and contemporary choral composition.
- Jerod Impichchaachaaha' Tate is a classical composer, citizen of the Chickasaw Nation in Oklahoma, and is dedicated to the development of American Indian classical composition.

We hope you will join us for all of these events this season—we're excited to introduce you to five amazing and gifted composers from across the country!

Seattle Pro Musica is grateful to Chorus America for its generous support of this 50th Anniversary education program.



