



*University of Maryland School of Music Presents*

**SPRING CHORAL SHOWCASE**  
**University Chorale and UMD Chamber Singers**

Sunday, April 30, 2023 • 7:30PM

GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL

AT THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



**SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC**

University of Maryland School of Music Presents

## SPRING CHORAL SHOWCASE

### UMD Chamber Singers

Jason Max Ferdinand, *Conductor*

Nathan Lofton, *Assistant Conductor*

Excerpts from *Messa di Gloria* ..... Giacomo Puccini  
(1858–1924)

*Ave Verum Corpus* ..... William Byrd  
(c. 1539–1623)

*Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz*, Op. 29, No. 2 ..... Johannes Brahms  
(1833–1897)

*Trois Chansons Bretonnes* ..... Henk Badings  
(1907–1987)

- I. La nuit en mer
- II. La complainte des âmes
- III. Soir d'été

*In Love with You* ..... Alec Powell  
(1858–1924)

*A Silence Haunts Me* ..... Jake Runestad  
(b. 1986)

*La Cucaracha* ..... arr. R. Sund  
(b. 1942)

*The Caged Bird Sings For Freedom* ..... Joel Thompson  
(b. 1988)

Matt Rynes, *clarinet*



**JASON MAX FERDINAND**, serves as the director of choral activities at the University of Maryland, College Park, assuming the role in Fall of 2022. He is very humbled to be standing on the shoulders of his mentor, Edward Maclary, who has guided the choral program for over 20 years. He is the founding artistic director of The Jason Max Ferdinand Singers — an ensemble of exceptional talents — and was the director of choral activities, chair of the music department and professor at Oakwood University, where he conducted the Aeolians of Oakwood University.

He is also the author of the book “Teaching with Heart: Tools for Addressing Societal Challenges Through Music,” published by GIA, and the editor of “The Jason Max Ferdinand Choral Series,” available through Walton Music. He maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and lecturer at schools, universities, churches and choral festivals and conferences, both domestic and international. As conductor of the Aeolians of Oakwood University, he distinguished himself on the national and international choral stages. In 2017, he earned the Outstanding Director Award, and the Aeolians were awarded the coveted “Choir of the World” title at the Llangollen International Musical Festival in Wales. In 2018, his choir won three gold medals at the 10th World Choir Games held in South Africa and won the competition’s overall championship in both the Spirituals and University Choir categories. In 2018, he was named Teacher of the Year by Oakwood University. The Aeolians made their first appearance at the national conference of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) in 2019 and the term “they broke ACDA” was used to describe their outstanding presentation. Ferdinand holds degrees from Oakwood University, Morgan State University and the University of Maryland, College Park, where he earned a doctorate in choral conducting. He serves on the board of the National Collegiate Choral Organization and is a former board member of the Alabama Choral Directors Association.



**NATHAN LOFTON** is a conductor, singer, educator and administrator based in Washington, D.C. He has prepared choruses for the Philadelphia Orchestra and for recording projects with Philadelphia Mural Arts, History Making Productions and NFL Films. From 2016 to 2021, Lofton was a singer, conductor and board member with Philadelphia’s Chestnut Street Singers. Additionally, he has performed with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Philadelphia Orchestra as a member of the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the Philadelphia Singers and the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir.

Lofton has served on the faculties at Temple University and Widener University. He has also held artistic and administrative positions with the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Opera Philadelphia, Artosphere Festival and the Boston New Music Initiative. Lofton is currently pursuing a doctor of musical arts degree in choral conducting at the University of Maryland, College Park and is a staff singer at St. John’s Church, Lafayette Square in Washington. He has previously earned degrees from the New England Conservatory, where he studied composition with Michael Gandolfi, and from Temple University, where he studied conducting with Paul Rardin. He has also participated in conducting masterclasses with Simon Halsey, David Hayes, Helmuth Rilling and Robert Spano.

The **UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND CHAMBER SINGERS** have achieved international renown with acclaimed performances of the most challenging repertoire ranging from the 16th through the 21st centuries. Collaborating frequently with the National Symphony Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in major works, the UMD Chamber Singers work regularly with internationally renowned conductors such as Christoph Eschenbach, Iván Fischer, Gianandrea Noseda, Matthew Halls, Laurence Cummings, James MacMillan, Nicholas McGegan and Nathalie Stutzmann. The ensemble appears frequently by invitation of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) and the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO). In the fall of 2019, the UMD Chamber Singers hosted and were the featured artists for the NCCO biennial conference.

The University of Maryland Chamber Singers is under the direction of Jason Max Ferdinand, who returned to his alma mater in the fall of 2022, following in the footsteps of his teacher, Edward Maclary. The UMD Chamber Singers, as part of the symphonic UMD Concert Choir, successfully collaborated with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and Maestro James Conlon in presenting the *Kaddish Symphony* by Leonard Bernstein. The choral program looks forward to the upcoming 2023–24 season, where they will appear in concert with both National Symphony Orchestra and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

**Excerpts from *Messa di Gloria***

Glory in the highest to God.  
 And on earth peace.  
 We praise Thee. We bless Thee.  
 We worship Thee. We glorify Thee.

Lord God, King of heaven,  
 God the Father Almighty.  
 Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father.  
 Who take away sins of the world, receive our supplication.  
 Have mercy on us.  
 With the Holy Spirit in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

***Ave Verum Corpus***

Hail true body, born of the Virgin Mary.  
 Truly suffering, was sacrificed on the cross for all, From whose pierced side flowed blood,  
 Be for us a foretaste in the final judgment.  
 O sweet, O merciful, O Jesus, Son of Mary,  
 Have mercy on me. Amen.

***Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz, Op. 29, No. 2***

Create in me a pure heart, o God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

– Psalm 51:10-12

**Trois Chansons Bretonnes****I. Night at Sea**

The gentle breeze swells our sail;  
Here is the first star to shine!  
Upon the waters that rock us,  
Friends, let us sail silently into the night.  
Every sound has begun to fall silent;  
You would think that  
Everything upon earth is dead —  
People as well as things,  
Birds as well as roses.  
Everything is falling asleep!

But the Sea, it is the living entity,  
Immensity in motion always,  
Taking jetties by storm,  
Contemptuous of both night and day!  
Apart from it, nothing exists  
Except the great lighthouse  
and its sad reflection.  
My friends, let us cast our nets without delay  
where the fishing is best!

Then, swathed in our sails  
And with faces naked to the stars let us sleep!  
Let us dream in utter peace  
About all those we love here below!  
Let us sleep on our schooners  
As if in our children's hammocks.  
And tomorrow at high tide,  
We will assemble at the coast, triumphant!

**II. The Lament of Souls**

Virgin Mary, O good Mother,  
O good Mother of Jesus!  
This is the bitter lament  
Sung by those who are no more!

We come this Autumn evening  
To knock at the doors of our Friends;  
It is Jesus Christ who commands us  
To awaken those who sleep!

You, who sleep in the black night,  
Alas! Do you ever consider  
That all of your relatives might be  
In the raging fires of Purgatory?

They are there, — your fathers, your mothers,  
Flames above, flames beneath —

Vainly hoping for the prayers  
That they have a right to expect from you!  
Imagine that they might be saying  
To all the Christians here on earth:  
'Pray for us though you do not know us,  
For our sons do not!

'We are abandoned in purgatory.  
Pray for those who do not pray!  
Pray for us! Pray endlessly,  
For our sons are ingrates!'

**III. Summer evening**

Lison, my pet, let us leave the hill,  
 For day dies away at the red horizon.  
 Before it dies away, let us profit from the moment:  
 To our home, come thither, my Lison!

In the immense peace of the emerging night  
 Builds the love song of the tiny crickets,  
 And the open plain that Phoebus embraces  
 Savors the ecstasy of the final rays.

Coaxing voices come from the oaks:  
 They are lullabies, tiny birds.  
 And behind her closed door, the farmer's wife Rose  
 Sings the same thing between two cradles!

It is the very pure hour, when through the branches  
 Passes the murmur of the great calmed wind.  
 It is the languid hour, the hour when the beloved  
 Happily suspends herself, in the arms of her lover.

It is the touching hour, when everything delights us,  
 When the bell sings the Angelus in the distance.  
 It is the gray hour, when the gentle breeze  
 Saturates itself in the intoxicating aroma of hay.

It is the hour when everything loves, when, weary of cursing,  
 The devil himself is a little better.  
 The heart strips itself of all that pollutes it.  
 The soul kneels before the Lord!

Lison, my little one, let us pray very quickly,  
 So that we do not separate ourselves from Eternity,  
 And so that he might invite us to escape this life  
 At the ravishing hour of a beautiful summer's evening.

– Théodore Botrel  
 (1868–1925)  
 trans. Vasken Ohanian

***La Cucaracha***

The cockroach, the cockroach  
 It no longer wants to walk  
 because it doesn't have, because it is lacking  
 money to spend.

A spotted cockroach  
 said to a red one  
 lets go to my homeland  
 to spend the season there.

All girls have  
 two stars in their eyes,  
 but the little Mexican girls  
 They are surely more beautiful  
 Ole!



***The Caged Bird Sings for Freedom***

A free bird leaps  
on the back of the wind  
and floats downstream  
till the current ends  
and dips his wing  
in the orange sun rays  
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks  
down his narrow cage  
can seldom see through  
his bars of rage  
his wings are clipped and  
his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze  
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees  
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn  
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams  
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream  
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied  
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings  
with a fearful trill  
of things unknown  
but longed for still  
and his tune is heard  
on the distant hill  
for the caged bird  
sings of freedom.

– Maya Angelou  
(1928–2014)

Puccini is justly celebrated as one of the greatest opera composers, renowned particularly for *La bohème*, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. He was the fourth generation of a family of church musicians from Lucca in northern Italy, and held the position of town organist and maestro di capella at the cathedral of San Paolino. He studied at the nearby Institute Musicale and in 1876 walked twenty miles from Lucca to Pisa and back to hear a performance of Verdi's *Aida*. It was this experience that finally convinced him to pursue a career in the theatre rather than the church. Whilst he was still only 18, he composed a setting of the mass for choir and orchestra as his graduation piece.

Since its publication in 1951, this setting has been universally known as the **Messa di Gloria** and has become a firmly established part of the choral repertoire. It comprises the usual mass sections: Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus and Benedictus and Agnus Dei. Puccini uses a standard classical orchestra with tenor, baritone and bass soloists. The *Messa di Gloria* is an uncomplicated work. Its style is direct and unashamedly operatic, and it is clearly influenced by Puccini's hero, Verdi. As a liturgical work written in an overtly operatic style, its most obvious antecedents are Rossini's *Petite Messe Solonelle* (1863) and Verdi's *Requiem* (1874). It is a remarkably assured work for an 18-year-old, full of color, vitality and musical surprises, such as the many sudden key changes.

The Gloria movement, a real tour de force, takes up nearly half the entire mass, hence the title by which the work has become known. It could easily be performed as a complete work in its own right, and abounds in rhythmic energy, soaring melodies and arresting dramatic gestures. Here Puccini's operatic instincts are fully expressed. There are several sections, starting with a joyous opening theme that defines the movement. The "Qui tollis" is truly a Verdian melody and is introduced by the chorus basses. "Cum sancto spiritu," as custom decreed, is set to an exuberant fugue, the final section of which combines the fugue subject with the opening "Gloria" theme, building to a compelling climax.

– Program note by John Bawden

**Ave Verum Corpus** is possibly Byrd's most famous and often-performed work. It is undoubtedly one of the most inspired creations of the late Renaissance in England. Byrd was an ingenious composer of sacred choral music as well as secular songs and instrumental works that featured his brilliant contrapuntal talents. Touted in his time as the "Father of British Music," Byrd's inventiveness as a composer is unveiled by his extensive range of sacred music styles, from fluid and penitential to devotional and succinct.

– Program note by Jason Max Ferdinand

Among the most important German composers of the late 19th century, Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg and spent much of his professional life in Vienna. While familiar to modern audiences for his symphonies, concertos and instrumental chamber music, Brahms also composed a large amount of vocal and choral music. Indeed, more than half of Brahms's 122 published opus numbers include vocal music.

Brahms composed the motet **Schaffe in mir, Gott, ein rein Herz** between 1856 and 1860, immediately following the death of Robert Schumann, his mentor and early champion. Brahms was a lifelong student of earlier composers, and took particular inspiration from two of his 17th- and 18th-century forbearers: Heinrich Schütz and Johann Sebastian Bach. The influence of Schütz and Bach can clearly be heard in *Schaffe in mir, Gott*, both in Brahms's extensive use of imitative counterpoint and in the large-scale form of the motet. *Schaffe in mir, Gott* is in three large sections, corresponding to the three verses taken from Psalm 51: a slow, five-voice introduction reminiscent of a Lutheran chorale, a four-voice fugue and a six-voice canon.

– Program note by Nathan Lofton

Henk Badings was born to Dutch parents on the Indonesian island of Java, then a Dutch colony. Badings was orphaned by the age of 7, and moved to the Netherlands in 1915 to live with guardians. Although interested in music from an early age, Badings was discouraged from pursuing a musical career by his guardians. Nevertheless, Badings continued to study music on his own while pursuing a degree in paleontology. By the mid-1930s, Badings abandoned his career in the sciences in order to devote his full energy to music.

Badings composed *Trois Chansons Bretonnes* in 1946, shortly after the end of Nazi occupation in the Netherlands, and they are imbued with a nostalgia for the pre-war years. The three songs are settings of texts by the French poet and playwright Théodore Botrel (1868–1925). In addition to the distinctive use of the French language in these pieces, Badings also drew inspiration from French musical models, particularly the music of Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, both of whom also composed three-movement choral works published as “trois chansons.”

Each of the three songs in *Trois Chansons Bretonnes* is distinct in subject and character. The first, a nocturnal seascape, features the tenors and basses over a lilting piano accompaniment that mimics the rocking of a boat at sea. The second movement, for a cappella chorus, invokes the Bretons customs for All Souls Day, during which the living pray for souls trapped in purgatory. The final movement captures a sensual moment between two lovers at sunset on a summer evening.

– Program note by Nathan Lofton

Alec Powell received acclaim as the composer of the viral video “Ratatouille: The TikTok Musical.” He serves as choir director at Mountain Ridge Junior High School in Utah, where he has had the honor of being added to the list of “40 under 40” that identifies 40 music educators under the age of 40 that are making a difference in their music programs.

*In Love with You* encapsulates the sundry feelings of being in love. It starts with the playful introduction of a motif that happens three times, with silence sandwiched between each one. This represents a young person wanting to express their love, but stopping due to their uneasiness. The chorus enters describing acts that aptly describe the emotion of love. The B section slows down, using longer notes in the tenors and basses, which is indicative of a mature type of love — watching sunsets and loving another person forever. The youthfulness then returns with the chorus singing irrepressible, ascending “Ah’s” before returning to the canonical A section, ending with the playful motif from the introduction.

– Program note by Brandon Brown

In 2017, Jake Runestad traveled to Leipzig, Germany to be present at the premiere of *Into the Light*, an extended work for chorus and orchestra commissioned by Valparaiso University to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Luther nailing his 95 Theses to a door in Wittenberg, thereby kicking off the Reformation. While traveling after the concert, Runestad found himself in the *Haus Der Musik Museum* in Vienna, where he encountered a facsimile of Ludwig van Beethoven's Heiligenstadt Testament.

It was the first time he had read the famous text, which is almost equal parts medical history, (including Beethoven's first admission to his brothers that he was going deaf), last will and testament, suicide note, letter of forgiveness and prayer of hope. Runestad was flabbergasted, and found himself thinking about Beethoven, about loss and about the tragedy of one of the greatest musicians of all time losing his hearing. Beethoven put it this way: "Ah, how could I possibly admit an infirmity in the one sense which ought to be more perfect in me than others, a sense which I once possessed in the highest perfection, a perfection such as few in my profession enjoy or ever have enjoyed."

When the American Choral Directors Association offered the Raymond W. Brock commission to Runestad for the 2019 National Conference, he took many months to settle on a topic, finally deciding on setting Beethoven's words. While researching Beethoven's output around the time of the letter, Runestad discovered that Beethoven wrote a ballet, *Creatures of Prometheus*, just a year before penning his testament. "Beethoven must have put himself into Prometheus mindset to embody the story," Runestad noted. "Just as Prometheus gifted humankind with fire and was punished for eternity, so did Beethoven gift the fire of his music while fighting at his deafness, and impending silence. What an absolutely devastating yet inspiring account of the power of the human spirit. In the moment of his loss when he wrote the Heiligenstadt Testament, he had no idea how profound his legacy would be ('legacy' being one of the themes of this ACDA's anniversary conference)."

Because of the length of the letter, a verbatim setting was impractical; Runestad once again turned to his friend and frequent collaborator, Todd Boss, to help. Boss's poem, entitled *A Silence Haunts Me — After Beethoven's Heiligenstadt Testament*, creates a *scena*, a monologue in Beethoven's voice for choir. The poem is both familiar and intimate; Boss has taken the fundamentals of Beethoven's letter and spun it into a libretto that places the reader/listener into the same small, rented room as one of the most towering figures of the Romantic Era.

To those words, Runestad had brought his full array of dramatic understanding and compositional skill; ***A Silence Haunts Me*** sounds more like a self-contained monologue from an opera than a traditional choral piece. Runestad, who has published three operas to date, shows his flair for melding music with text even more dramatically than familiar settings like *Let My Love Be Heard* and *Please Stay*. He sets the poetry with an intense, emotional directness and uses some of Beethoven's own musical ideas to provide context. Stitched into the work are hints at familiar themes from the *Moonlight Sonata*, the 3rd, 6th and 9th Symphonies, and *Creatures of Prometheus*, but they are, in Runestad's words, "filtered through a hazy, frustrated and defeated state of being."

In wrestling with Beethoven, with legacy and with loss, Runestad has done what he does best: written a score where the poetry creates the form, where the text drives the rhythm, where the melody supports the emotional content and where the natural sounding vocal lines, arresting harmony and idiomatic accompaniment — in this case, piano in honor of Beethoven — come together to offer the audience in original, engaging, thoughtful and passionate work of choral art.

– Program note by Jonathan Talberg

Without question, *La Cucaracha* is the most well-known of Mexican folk melodies, which has received many rhythmical and harmonical treatments by composers all over the globe—therefore, it seems fitting to hear what Robert Sund from Sweden has created.

– Program note by Jason Max Ferdinand

Maya Angelou’s beautiful poetry in *The Caged Bird Sings For Freedom* seems to follow a simple formula on its surface: a verse about a free bird, a verse about a caged bird and a poignant refrain; however, when one views the imagery in the light of the history of the Black freedom struggle in the United States, Maya Angelou’s verse illuminates the wellspring of Black creativity and resistance. The juxtaposition of a bird free to “claim the sky his own” with a bird standing “on the grave of dreams” is a powerful image that reflects the vast disparity that still persists within our culture. The caged bird’s only act of resistance is to sing. To sing, despite clipped wings and tied feet, for “things unknown but longed for still.” To sing for a more equitable future for every human being, regardless of gender, orientation, creed or race. To sing for freedom.

– Program note by Joel Thompson

**University of Maryland Chamber Singers**Jason Max Ferdinand, *Conductor*Nathan Lofton, *Assistant Conductor*Yihan Sun, *Accompanist*

Joshua Bates

Sydney Black\*

Amelia Brooks-Everist

Mykayla Brown

Kobe Brown+

Bella Cadirola\*

Louis Cleare

Solomon Collins

Kai Daley

Brynn Farlow

Magnolia Flynn-Lebischak

Lily Gallihue

Mark Helms+

Mihika Kulkarni\*

Ana Lane

Delina Levine

Nathan Lofton+

David Mann+

Nicholas Mathew

Jacob Mitchell

Reyna Moore

Gracie Null

Paige Peercy

Cecilia Plumer

Charlotte Richardson-Deppe

Keely Sigler

Colton Smith

Aidan Wilbur

Maeve Wildes

Joel Zinkievich

+ Graduate Conductor

\*Ensemble Assistant

**CHORAL ACTIVITIES AT THE UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC** offers students, faculty and staff, and the community a wide variety of ensembles. The UMD Chamber Singers, University Chorale, UMD Treble Choir, Tactus, Opera Chorus and UMD Summer Chorus perform works from all eras and styles from early Renaissance music to the 20th century. Director of Choral Activities Jason Max Ferdinand also oversees the School's graduate program in choral conducting. Rehearsals and concerts take place in the state-of-the-art Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and the intimate Memorial Chapel.

*For more information, contact:*

**UMD Choral Activities**

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**JASON MAX FERDINAND**

*Associate Professor of Music & Director of Choral Activities*

**KENNETH ELPUS**

*Professor and Division Coordinator of Choral Music Education*

**LAURI JOHNSON**

*Choral Administrator*

**GRADUATE CONDUCTORS**

Kobe Brown  
Mark Helms  
Nathan Lofton  
David Mann

**CHORAL ASSISTANTS**

Sydney Black, *Artistic Operations*  
Isabella Cadirola, *Senior Artistic Operations*  
Megan Flynn, *Artistic Operations*  
Mihika Kulkarni, *Senior Artistic Operations*

**UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC VOICE FACULTY**

Diba Alvi, *Soprano and Diction & Pedagogy*  
Jennifer Casey Cabot, *Soprano*  
Kevin Short, *Bass-Baritone*  
Gran Wilson, *Tenor*  
Delores Ziegler, *Mezzo-Soprano*  
Kenneth Elpus, *Choral Music Education*  
Craig Kier, *Director of Maryland Opera Studio*  
Jason Max Ferdinand, *Director of Choral Activities*

# UPCOMING CHORAL ACTIVITIES EVENTS

## **SPRING CONCERT**

Mon, May 1 • 8 PM

**Voix de Chanson (formerly Femmes de Chanson)**

**FreundeMusik (formerly MännerMusik)**  
*GILDENHORN RECITAL HALL, THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER*

FREE, NO TICKETS REQUIRED

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## **BACH CANTATA SERIES**

Thu, May 4 • 1:30 PM

**Kobe Brown**, conductor

*GRAND PAVILLION, THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER*

FREE, NO TICKETS REQUIRED

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## **BARTÓK AND STRAUSS**

Fri, May 5, 2023 • 8PM

**UMD CONCERT CHOIR**

**UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

*DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL, THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER*

TICKETS REQUIRED – PAY WHAT YOU WISH

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## **UMD SUMMER CHORUS**

Sat, July 22 • 8PM

*DEKELBOUM CONCERT HALL, THE CLARICE SMITH PERFORMING ARTS CENTER*

FREE, NO TICKETS REQUIRED

Open to college students, community singers and high school choristers—no auditions required. Featuring Mozart's *Coronation Mass, K. 317*, Handel's *Let thy hand be strengthened* and Vaughan Williams' *Five Mystical Songs*. Rehearsals run from July 5 through July 21. To register, visit [music.umd.edu](http://music.umd.edu).

FREE, NO TICKETS REQUIRED

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