



Chamber Singers Program Notes, Texts, and Translations



SPRING 2026
SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
Music Program



Program Notes, Text, and Translations

Tonight's performance marks the final concert in the Chamber Singers' 2025–2026 season, *The Light Within*, and the first installment of a newly established Masterworks Series. Throughout this season, we have explored the many expressions of light in our daily lives—the light within ourselves, the light we share with others, the light we receive, and the Divine light that guides and sustains us. Each program has invited us to reflect on how light shapes our understanding of purpose, connection, and faith.

This evening brings that journey to its culmination. Our focus turns to the truth that we are not only seekers of light, but bearers of it. In moments of joy and in times of struggle, light remains present—steady, resilient, and ultimately triumphant. Even the smallest flame has the power to illuminate the deepest darkness. These ideas resonate through the radiant praise of *Gloria* by Antonio Vivaldi and find profound, reflective expression in *Illuminare* by Elaine Hagenberg. As the program concludes, we turn our hearts toward the source of all light—acknowledging Jesus Christ as the Creator and Supreme Light, whose presence brings clarity, hope, and enduring peace.

Introductory note by Dr. Benjamin Gaughran

I AM LIGHT, CORDERO

Originally from Venezuela, Carlos Cordero is emerging as a compelling voice in contemporary choral composition. *I Am Light* (2019) explores themes of acceptance and the celebration of oneself and those around us. The composer reflects, “While writing *I Am Light*, Venezuela was facing one of the longest power outages in its history. As a Venezuelan living abroad, I felt both helpless and guilty writing this piece, yet I hope one day it may be sung as a celebration of better times for my country.”

The work unfolds as an energetic, rhythmically driven journey, featuring interlocking patterns and flowing melodic lines that mirror its message of connection, resilience, and shared humanity.

GLORIA, VIVALDI

Antonio Lucio Vivaldi composed this *Gloria* in Venice, probably in 1715, for the choir of the Ospedale della Pietà, an orphanage for girls (or more probably a home, generously endowed by the girls' "anonymous" fathers, for the illegitimate daughters of Venetian noblemen and their mistresses). The Ospedale prided itself on the quality of its musical education and the excellence of its choir and orchestra. Vivaldi, a priest, music teacher and virtuoso violinist, composed many sacred works for the Ospedale, where he spent most of his career, as well as hundreds of instrumental concertos to be played by the girls' orchestra. This, his most famous choral piece, presents the traditional Gloria from the Latin Mass in twelve varied cantata-like sections.

The wonderfully sunny nature of the Gloria, with its distinctive melodies and rhythms, is characteristic of all of Vivaldi's music, giving it an immediate and universal appeal. The opening movement is a joyous chorus, with trumpet and oboe obligato. The extensive orchestral introduction establishes two simple motives, one of octave leaps, the other a quicker, eighth note – sixteenth note figure, that function as the ritornello. The choir enters in chorale-like fashion, syllabically declaiming the text in regular rhythms, contrasting with the orchestral ritornello, which contains most of the melodic interest of the movement.

The B minor 'Et in terra pax' is in nearly every way a contrast to the first. It is in triple rather than duple time, in a minor key, and rather slower. Its imitative and expressive chromatic texture evokes the motets of the Renaissance era, the so-called "stile antico". 'Laudamus te', a passionate duet for soprano and mezzo-soprano, gives us some hint of the skill of Vivaldi's young singers.

'Gratias agimus tibi' is a very broad and entirely homophonic prelude to a fugal allegro on 'Propter magnam gloriam'. The largo 'Domine Deus, Rex coelestis' is in the form of duet between the solo soprano and the solo violin, followed by the joyful F major 'Domine Fili unigenite' chorus in what Vivaldi and his contemporaries would have regarded as the 'French style'. It is dominated by the dotted rhythms characteristic of a French overture. 'Domine Deus, Agnus Dei' features the alto soloist, with the chorus providing an antiphonal response, *qui tollis peccata mundi*, to each intercession. The bold harmonies of the following section, 'Qui tollis', provide a refreshing change of tone color, and complement the intercessional alto aria, 'Qui sedes ad dextera Patris'. The string accompaniment contains recollections of the opening movement, and prepares for the following movement, 'Quoniam tu solus sanctus', which takes the shape of a brief reprise of the opening movement's broken octaves.

The powerful stile antico double fugue on 'Cum Sancto Spiritu' that ends the work is an arrangement by Vivaldi of the ending of a Gloria per due chori composed in 1708 by an older contemporary, the now forgotten Veronese composer Giovanni Maria Ruggieri, whom Vivaldi seems to have held in high esteem, as he used a second adaptation of this piece in another, lesser-known D Major Gloria setting, RV 588.

Today Vivaldi is one of the most popular of all composers, who during his lifetime enjoyed considerable success and fortune, which he squandered through extravagance, and when he died in Vienna he was buried in a pauper's grave. For two centuries after his death, the Gloria lay undiscovered until the late 1920s, when it was found buried among a pile of forgotten Vivaldi manuscripts. However, it was not performed until September 1939 in Siena in an edition by the composer Alfredo Casella. This was by no means an authentic edition (he described it as an "elaborazione"), as he embellished the original orchestration of trumpet, oboe, strings, and continuo, while reducing the role of the continuo, and cut sections from three movements. It was not until 1957 that the now familiar original version was published and given its first performance at the First Festival of Baroque Choral Music at Brooklyn College, NY.

Program note by Peter Carey, Royal Free Singers

Gloria in excelsis Deo,
et in terra pax hominibus bonae voluntatis.

Laudamus te,
benedicimus te,
adoramus te,
glorificamus te,
gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam
tuam,
Dominus Deus, Rex caelestis,
Deus Pater omnipotens.

Domine Fili Unigenite, Jesu Christe,
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei, Filius Patris,

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,

qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis;
qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram;
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Jesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu,
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

The English translation of the *Gloria in excelsis* is from *The Roman Missal* © 2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

OUT OF THE SILENCE, STILL

William Grant Still is known for his incredible contributions to American music and is one of the most celebrated African-American composers in American history. A prolific composer with over 200 works and an important historical figure: he was an integral part of the Harlem Renaissance and was the first African-American composer to have works premiered by major orchestras and opera companies in the United States (among many other accolades and accomplishments).

Grant Still's *Seven Traceries* was originally written for solo piano as a collection of movements dedicated to his wife, Verna Arvey. According to Grant Still's daughter, these pieces were intended to capture "seven aspects of God." These seven movements create a meditative cycle, evoking many impressions of spiritual introspection.

Out of the Silence is the fourth of the set, and has been adapted by the composer for strings, flute, and piano, highlighting the flute and piano in semi-soloistic roles. The piece is ethereal, expressive, and elusive. Grant Still uses jazz-inspired harmonies, creating a sonority that intertwines tonal ambiguity with suspended dissonance and calm resolution.

Program note by Dr. Jakob Hofer

ILLUMINARE, HAGENBERG

Illuminare is Elaine's first extended work, consisting of five movements for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra. Using lesser-known sacred Latin texts, the five sections create a narrative arc with common thematic material woven throughout.

With a majestic and bright opening in D major, *Illuminare* begins with a radiant flurry of 16th notes representing the entrance of Light. Then the voices enter in powerful unison, and the Ambrosian hymn text bursts into a punctuated and joyful "Gloriae" section. As the music turns to a softer legato passage, a portion of the peace theme is revealed in the cello—a theme that will emerge several times throughout the work. The music then returns to the joyful rhythmic momentum of the beginning.

The second movement features the women's voices and portrays a tender season of beauty. The elegant words of Hildegard von Bingen harken back to an image of Eden—a time of goodness and purity. After a slow and gradual ascent to the word "pacis" (peace), a brief moment of the peace theme gracefully reappears in the cello, concluding with serene, sustained tones.

Movement three takes a dramatic shift. Sensing an ominous shadow on the horizon, the choir sings the traditional Kyrie text (Lord have mercy). Then, a percussive B- minor blast of fury disrupts the world as the text turns to “Nox et tenebrae” (night and darkness). Accented rhythms and mixed meter further create chaos, confusion, and despair.

In movement four, the darkness begins to fade, and the peace theme emerges once again, yet this time lingering in a minor mode. The shadows of the night clear away and the choir ascends to the word “Lux” (light). Yearning for the peace they once knew, the singers plead a heartfelt prayer, culminating in a dramatic crescendo to “munera pacis” (grant us peace). Then, suddenly, the music becomes still and calm. The peace theme that has been whispered throughout the work is finally revealed to be the voice of Christ gently assuring us:

“Peace I leave with you,
my peace I give to you.”

The orchestra swells to affirm these comforting words, then concludes by echoing the beauty of movement two—now with a new hope of an even greater peace.

At the arrival of the final movement, joy is restored as the orchestra gradually returns to full force. Energetic rhythms support the soaring vocal lines as the choir sings from the prophecy in the Canticle of Zechariah: “illuminare his qui in tenebris” (illuminate those in darkness). Then a return to brilliant D major and rhythmic material from movement one blaze forth to declare: Light has triumphed to guide us toward a brighter future.

Program note by Elaine Hagenberg

I. Splendor

Text:

*Splendor paternae gloriae,
de luce lucem proferens,
lux lucis et fons luminis,
diem dies illuminans.*

Translation:

Splendor of God's glory,
brings forth light from light,
light of light,
light's living spring,
Day, all days illuminates.

II. Caritas

Text:

*Caritas abundat in omnia
de imis excellentissima
super sidera
acque amatissima in omnia.
Quia summo regi
osculum pacis dedit*

IV. Munera Pacis

Text:

*Ecce jam noctis tenuatur umbra,
Lux et auroræ rutilans coruscat: Supplices rerum
Dominum canora Voce precemur:*

*Ut reos culpæ miseratus, omnem Pellat angorem,
tribuat salutem,
Donet et nobis bona sempiternae Munera pacis.*

*Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not
as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart
be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Translation:

Behold, already night and shadows taper off
Light and dawn sparkle and quiver
We humbly beg the Lord through song
Our voices pray:

Though we are guilty, view us with compassion Banish
anguish, bestow health

Translation:

Love abounds in all,
from the depths most excellent
to beyond the stars,
and loving toward all
she has given the highest king
the kiss of peace.

III. Nox

Text:

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.

Nox et tenebrae et nubila, confusa mundi et turbida
Caligo terrae scinditur percussa solis spiculo

Translation:

Lord have mercy.
Christ have mercy.

Night and darkness and fog, confused world and
turmoil dark gloom tears the earth beats and stabs the
sun

Grant us everlasting goodness
Give us peace.

V. Illuminare his

Text:

Illuminare his qui in tenebris
et in umbra mortis sedent:
ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis.

Translation:

Illuminate those in darkness
and in the shadow of death sit
direct our footpath in the way of peace.

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT, MADSEN

In this expressive arrangement of *The Lord Is My Light*, CJ Madsen draws on the timeless text of Psalm 27 to create a work of quiet strength and assurance. The psalm's central message—trust in the Lord as a source of light, salvation, and protection—resonates deeply, offering comfort in moments of uncertainty and a steady reminder of faith's sustaining power.

Scored for SATB choir with four-hand piano, the accompaniment plays a vital role in shaping the emotional landscape of the piece. Flowing textures and rich harmonic support provide both momentum and warmth, allowing the choral lines to rise with clarity and purpose. As the work unfolds, moments of introspection give way to passages of confident affirmation, mirroring the psalmist's journey from vulnerability to unwavering trust.

Program note by Dr. Benjamin Gaughran

Thank you for joining us this evening. We look forward to seeing you at our future concerts.

