

**‘If There Be Music...’  
MacDonald and the Musical Imagination**

May 29, 2024  
Armerding Concert Hall, Wheaton College

**Excerpt from ‘The Fantastic Imagination’**

*Baronger Bieger, reader*

**Excerpt from *Phantastes***

*Devorah Allen, reader*

**Winner of the ‘Setting MacDonald to Music’ Competition**

**Rebecca L. Abbott, ‘He Has Begin a Story’**

*Rebecca Abbot, piano and voice*

‘He has begun a story without a beginning, and it will never have any end...  
As through the hard rock go the branching silver veins; as into the solid land run the creeks and gulfs  
from the unresting sea; as the lights and influences of the upper worlds sink silently through the earth's  
atmosphere; so doth Faerie invade the world of men...’

**Hamish MacCunn, Songs from MacDonald’s *Within and Without***

*Rhiannon Jeffrey and Daniel Gableman, readers*

*Robin Wiper, soprano*

*Mary Vanbooszer, piano*

**‘Father’s Hymn for the Mother to Sing’**

My child is lying on my knees;  
The signs of heaven she reads:  
My face is all the heaven she sees,  
Is all the heaven she needs.

And she is well, yea, bathed in bliss,  
If heaven is in my face—  
Behind it, all is tenderness,  
And truthfulness and grace.

I mean her well so earnestly.  
Unchanged in changing mood;  
My life would go without a sigh  
To bring her something good.

I also am a child, and I  
Am ignorant and weak;  
I gaze upon the starry sky,  
And then I must not speak;

For all behind the starry sky  
Behind the world so broad,  
Behind men’s hearts and souls doth lie  
The Infinite of God.

If true to her, though troubled sore,  
I cannot choose but be;  
Thou, who art peace for evermore,  
Art very true to me.

If I am low and sinful, bring  
More love where need is rife;  
*Thou* knowest what an awful thing  
It is to be a life.

Hast thou not wisdom to enwrap  
My waywardness about,  
In doubting safety on the lap  
Of Love that knows no doubt?

Lo! Lord, I sit in thy wide space,  
My child upon my knee;  
She looketh up unto my face,  
And I look up to thee.

**'The Organ Boy's Song'**

Wenn ich höre dich mir nah',  
Stimmen in den Blättern da;  
Wenn ich fühl' dich weit und breit,  
Vater, das ist Seligkeit.

Nun die Sonne liebend scheint,  
Mich mit dir und All vereint;  
Biene zu den Blumen fliegt,  
Seel' an Lieb' sich liebend schmiegt.

So mich völlig lieb du hast,  
Daseyn ist nicht eine Last;  
Wenn ich seh' und höre dich,  
Das genügt mir inniglich.

When I hear thee close to me,  
Like the voices of the leaves;  
When I feel thee everywhere,  
Father, this is bliss.

Now the sun is lovingly shining,  
I with thee and the universe;  
The bee flies to the flower,  
The soul is lovingly nestling into love.

If thou lovest me fully,  
Being is not a burden,  
When I see and hear thee,  
That is all I need.

(Trans. by Johannes Elias)

**Excerpt from *The Princess and Curdie***

*Amanda Vernon, reader*

**Matthew Roy, 'The Sleepers Shall Rise'**

*Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson, reader*

*Choir, directed by Chuck King*

*Mary Vanbooszer, piano*

**'The Sleepers Shall Rise' from MacDonald's *The Princess and Curdie*\***

The stars are spinning their threads,  
And the clouds are the dust that flies,  
And the suns are weaving them up  
For the time when the sleepers shall rise.

The ocean in music rolls,  
And gems are turning to eyes,  
And the trees are gathering souls  
For the day when the sleepers shall rise.

The weepers are learning to smile,  
And laughter to glean the sighs;  
Burn and bury the care and guile,  
For the day when the sleepers shall rise.

In the rainbow's nest lies the key of gold  
To the land of the shadows grey.  
Oh, dear brothers, oh sisters, love is the whole  
For those who believe and obey.

Oh, the dews and the moths and the daisy red,  
The larks and the glimmers and flows!  
The lilies and sparrows and daily bread,  
And the something that nobody knows!

\*verse four by Matthew Roy

**David von Kampen, 'Flood the Gold Earth'**

*Brenton Dickieson, reader  
Choir, directed by Chuck King*

**From MacDonald's *Sir Gibbie***

My thoughts are like fire-flies, pulsing in moonlight;  
My heart like a silver cup, filled with red wine;  
My soul a pale gleaming horizon, whence soon light  
Will flood the gold earth with a torrent divine.

**Josh Rodriguez, 'I See Your World in Light' and 'Holy Midnight of the Soul' (World Premier)**

*Malcolm Guite and Sarah Emtage, readers  
Choir, directed by Chuck King*

**Guite's 'I Am the Light of the World'**

I see your world in light that shines behind me,  
Lit by a sun whose rays I cannot see.  
The smallest gleam of light still seems to find me  
Or find the child who's hiding deep inside me.  
I see your light reflected in the water,  
Or kindled suddenly in someone's eyes,  
It shimmers through translucent leaves in summer,  
Or spills from silver veins in leaded skies.  
It gathers in the candles at our vespers  
It concentrates in tiny drops of dew  
At times it sings for joy, at times it whispers,  
But all the time it calls me back to you.  
I follow you upstream through this dark night  
My savior, source, and spring, my life and light.

**Song from MacDonald's 'A Hidden Life'**

Ah, holy midnight of the soul,  
When stars alone are high;  
When winds are resting at their goal,  
And sea-waves only sigh!

Ambition faints from out the will;  
Asleep sad longing lies;  
All hope of good, all fear of ill,  
All need of action dies;

Because God is, and claims the life  
He kindled in thy brain;  
And thou in him, rapt far from strife,  
Diest and liv'st again.

**Conversation with Josh Rodriguez and J.A.C. Redford**

*Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson moderator*

**J.A.C. Redford, *Phantastes***

*Stephen Uhl, piano*

## Notes on the Music

### Rebecca L. Abbott, 'He Has Begun a Story'

I grew up among my father's thousands of books on the Inklings and their inspirations, which included MacDonald's fantasy works and other fiction. I was especially taken with C. S. Lewis's understanding of myth as a 'gleam' of truth falling on the imagination—at one point, I even worked on memorizing his 'Weight of Glory' essay in both English and German!—and found this thought presented even more enticingly in MacDonald's *Phantastes*; the world of 'Faerie invade[s] the world of men' (ch. 13). I wanted to tie it in more deliberately with the idea of story, so opened with a phrase the fairies say to mock the main character: 'He has begun a story without a beginning, and it will never have an end' (ch. 8).

Those words suggested beginning the song in the middle, as it were, without any more introduction than an arresting chord—a first invasion of Faerie. A couple different keys for the song are suggested simultaneously throughout, like the overlayering of two worlds at once. Then we hear a couple measures of higher notes, suggesting 'the lights and influences of the upper worlds,' which then descend into our world. I did close with the same chord as the opening, but an octave higher, which is my interpretation of the worlds joining more closely, of our being lifted up into the other realms that even now saturate our own. (Rebecca L. Abbott, 2024)

### Hamish MacCunn, 'Father's Hymn for the Mother to Sing' and 'The Organ Boy's Song'

Hamish MacCunn (1868-1916) was arguably the brightest shooting star in the first four years of London's Royal College of Music. Coming from a musical family, he entered the RCM on an Open Scholarship on its foundation in 1883 and quickly attracted public as well as institutional notice. An overture, *Cior Mhor*, first performed by the College Orchestra, was repeated under August Manns at the Crystal Palace on 27 October 1885 and thereafter powerful support was given to the young composer by figures as influential as Manns, Henschel, Grove, and Parry. Critical response to MacCunn's *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, a concert overture taking its title from Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* referred to the work's 'strength and felicity of expression,' to bold conception and brilliant scoring and to its being 'the most promising maiden effort by a British-born musician we have heard for some time.' Two prestigious commissions from the Carl Rosa Opera Company were to occupy MacCunn for much of the 1890s. *Jeanie Deans* (after Scott's *The Heart of Midlothian*) was premiered at Edinburgh's Lyceum Theatre in 1894 and *Diarmid* (to a libretto by Queen Victoria's son-in-law the Marquis of Lorne) at Covent Garden in 1897. Both were well received at the time. More recently they have been described respectively as 'the finest serious opera of the late Victorian period' and 'a staggering piece of work for a British composer of only twenty-nine writing in 1897.' Apart from one further cantata and a light opera, his later compositions are confined to occasional works, salon pieces, and songs.

Continuing MacCunn's pattern of Scottish-inspired music, the songs being performed this evening, 'Father's Hymn for the Mother to Sing' and 'The Organ Boy's Song,' are part of a set of three songs with text taken from MacDonald's first published work, the dramatic poem *Within and Without* (1855). MacCunn also set MacDonald's four 'Picture Songs' to music.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The biographical notes were taken from the [Museum of Music History Website](#), where you can find further information on MacCunn.

## Matthew Roy, 'The Sleepers Shall Rise'

My setting of 'The Sleepers Shall Rise' includes an additional stanza inserted between MacDonald's third and fourth verses, which I wrote myself:

In the rainbow's nest lies the key of gold  
To the land of the shadows grey.  
Oh, dear brothers, oh sisters, love is the whole  
For those who believe and obey.

I sought to match MacDonald's elusivity, in part by stitching together several themes from his other writings.<sup>2</sup>

I wanted the music to have a face-value simplicity to it, but in a way that leaves the door open to mystery and suggestibility. Each verse therefore makes use of a lullaby-like tune in 6/8, which appears with subtle variations each verse. For all the MacDonald stanzas the tune is in the Dorian mode, minor and with a rather Pirates of the Caribbean-esque lowered seventh, but shining with unexpectedly bright major IV chords like flashes of light glancing off of Princess Irene's spinning wheel. It is at the penultimate verse (of which I wrote the poetry) that the mood of the piece changes, as though a key has been turned and the rainbow is shining with new, never before seen colors. Here I use the warmer Mixolydian mode, nestling the melody in the altos before fragmenting with staggered entrances at the words 'Love is the whole.' The final verse shifts back to Dorian, but now modulated up a whole step and delivered in a more pressing and rhapsodic manner.

The image of Princess Irene using her spinning wheel as an accompaniment to her singing provided inspiration for my conception of the collaborative piano part. There is a rich history of pianistic depictions of spinning wheels, such as Franz Schubert's 1814 Lied 'Gretchen am Spinnrade', Albert Ellmenreich's pedagogical standby 'Spinnliedchen' (ca. 1863), and Scottish composer Erik Chisholm's 'Spinning Song' from his 1944 collection of preludes 'At the Edge of the Great World.' At the onset I imagined the wheel oscillating as if in slow motion, drone-like open fifths rocking slowly between the right and left hands. The writing becomes more dynamic in subsequent verses, with rolling eighth-note arpeggiations in the second verse, and dizzying sixteenth-note filigree in the third. In the fourth (Mixolydian) verse the piano shifts from spinning motion to static blocks: pillars of sound that take Ossian-like strides to new vistas. The final verse returns to the energy of a spinning wheel in full force, the open fifths of the beginning now 'power chords' that pound out the 'something that nobody knows.'

I have a deep appreciation for folk musics, and decided to intersperse my music with a Scottish Gaelic song entitled *Mhòrag's na horo gheallaidh* [vo:rag sna horo ǰauLɪ]. This is a waulking song, a work song typically performed by groups of women who sang it while sitting in a circle beating and rotating newly woven tweed against a table to shrink it and make it waterproof. I saw the song as a fruitful connection to MacDonald's Scottish provenance and complimenting the symbolism of Princess Irene at the spinning wheel as another example of music and storytelling through pre-industrial, female labor. In general waulking songs are highly rhythmic so as to coordinate the movements of the workers, feature vocables such as 'horo' or 'him ò,' and are sung in Gàidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) with solo verses and group refrains. The lyrics of *Mhòrag* as they have been written down are enigmatic, describing cattle herding, lamenting separated lovers, and possibly signaling an encoded reference to Prince Charles during the Jacobite Uprising. For this composition I used only the refrain—or *sèist*—working off of a 1998 edition from a collection by Deborah L. White. The melody appears between verses in 'The Sleepers Shall Rise,' coalescing from fragments in the piano to a stirring choral rendition after verse three. (Matthew Roy, 2022)

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<sup>2</sup> See [this link](#) for more on this aspect of Matthew Roy's process.

## **David von Kampen, ‘Flood the Gold Earth’**

David von Kampen (b. 1986) sets a poem from MacDonald’s *Sir Gibbie* to a vibrant and ethereal piano accompaniment. The flowing repetitions of the piano line in the opening section evoke images of moonlight. The soaring soprano line interweaving with alto voices, and the punctuated rhythms of the tenor and bass voices, offer a vivid impression of the fireflies’ pulsing dance. There is a slowing of the dance as we enter a brief contemplative moment, rich with the sustained harmonies of the choir. A mood of anticipation builds as the flowing piano theme returns, merging with the rising melodic and harmonic lines of the choir. The sun is slowly rising, and the triumphant conclusion leaves us with an image of dazzling golden light. (Amanda Vernon, 2024)

## **Josh Rodriguez, ‘I See Your World in Light’**

In the fall of 2019, I was invited by Immanuel Lutheran Church to contribute a new carol on the theme, ‘Christ the Light of the World’ to be sung by the church choir’s Service of Lessons and Carols. After several years primarily composing instrumental music, I was thrilled by the opportunity to write for voices (in this case, for my home church choir). At some point, while browsing online, I came across a beautiful sonnet by English poet Malcolm Guite written in response to John 8:12. The music rushed forth in response, much quicker than usual, and within a few hours (and a few edits later in the week), the music was done!

For the inquisitive, this music begins in the medieval Dorian mode – one that could be described as situated between the darker tones of the minor scale and the brighter sounds of the major scale. Somehow, this felt appropriate for a poem celebrating the power of ‘the smallest gleam of light’ that finds the ‘child deep inside me’ and explores what it means to follow Christ ‘upstream through this dark night.’ (Josh Rodriguez, 2024)

## **‘Holy Midnight of the Soul’**

I’ve always gravitated towards poetry but didn’t receive much training in how to interpret its deeper meaning. This changed during the pandemic when Malcolm Guite began his ‘Spell in the Library’ video series on YouTube. Each episode introduced me to great poetry, and Malcolm’s concise and enthusiastic response illuminated its deeper meaning. It was in 2023 through one of these videos that I was introduced to MacDonald’s poem *The Holy Midnight*. And when I did, much like *I See Your World In Light*, the music rushed forth—creativity sparking further creativity across time and space. But unlike that poem, this creative burst had no promised premiere. I simply wrote it because I could not resist—I had to respond to the poem in song.

Earlier this year (2024), when I found out about the George MacDonald conference, I sensed the strange urge to reach out to the organizers and offer this anthem. I don’t believe I’ve ever done this sort of thing before, and I assumed that, if there was any music, it would already have been finalized. After all, it was only nine weeks away from the conference! To my bewildering surprise, I received a surprise email two weeks later about their interest in premiering the piece, and one of the organizers was someone with whom I’d crossed paths in music school twelve years prior! I was reminded again that the quiet voice that we are asked to follow, leads us into surprising, mysterious experiences, ‘because God is, and claims the life He kindled.’ This is the hope on which we are invited to build our lives—a hope that becomes crucial when we face our own ‘holy midnight of the soul.’ (Josh Rodriguez, 2024)

## **J.A.C. Redford, *Phantastes***

*Phantastes* is a fantasia for solo piano, composed in 2008 for Southern California pianist and educator, Alison Edwards. The title is taken from the novel by George MacDonald, which book JAC Redford was reading at the time he was composing the music. MacDonald's novel is introduced with the following verse:

Phantastes from 'their fount' all shapes deriving,  
In new habiliments can quickly dight.

The word 'dight' means 'transform' and the reader is led to understand that a phantasm or ghost, without altering its essential nature, may nevertheless change shape as easily as we change clothing. Throughout his novel, MacDonald mines the metaphoric value of this idea. The passage is also about as cogent a summary of the musical development of this shape-shifting piano composition as one could wish. In the course of the work, all of the musical gestures can be traced back to their 'fount' in

two primary ideas: The first of these is the relationship between A minor and D<sup>b</sup> Major, which provides an acerbic vocabulary of unsettled and mysterious chords and scales which are developed and transposed throughout the composition. The second is a lyrical theme with hints of Gaelic history that also appears in the work played backwards (retrograde), upside down (inversion), as well as backwards and upside down (retrograde inversion). These two primary ideas alternate throughout the composition, creating a narrative form over which the improvisatory embellishments of the classic fantasia are draped like 'new habiliments.' (J.A.C. Redford, 2024)



## Artists

**Rebecca L. Abbott** holds a BMus from Wheaton College with studies in voice, organ, music theater, and English literature, including intensive study of mythology and George MacDonald with Rolland Hein; an MA in liturgy and the arts from Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, with sacred music at Boston University; and a DWS from the Institute for Worship Studies. Serving as an instructor in hymnology at the Sacred Music Institute of America, she also enjoys translating and versifying texts and working with musicians in French- and German-speaking countries. She is currently touring with ‘As a Matter of Fancy,’ her debut solo album of original compositions, which can be heard through links at [rebeccaabbott.hearnow.com](http://rebeccaabbott.hearnow.com), and is also performing literary songs on pipe organ as the Singing Organist.

**Chuck King** is a pastoral musician and music educator. He served two churches during his three decades in full-time ministry, followed by ten years in academia (with interim choir duties in three churches). He holds degrees in trombone performance, music history, education (guidance and counseling), and historical theology. He has been privileged as a generalist to steward the gifts and resources of church music programs, college music departments, and seminary chapels. Currently ‘failing at retirement,’ Mr. King is an adjunct lecturer at Wheaton College and Elmhurst University, director of a retirement center chorale, and music director for New Covenant Church in Naperville, Illinois. His choral conducting has been shaped by extended masterclasses with Dale Warland and Earl Rivers (Cincinnati) and Jerry Blackstone and Eugene Rogers (Michigan). King came to George MacDonald by way of C. S. Lewis, whom he began to read to avoid studying for undergraduate final exams. From *Phantastes* and *Lilith* to the *Unspoken Sermons* to the Scottish novels to the so-called children's stories, George MacDonald has fed his imagination, delighted his spirit, and inspired his now-grown children to read voraciously. Chuck and Karen have three grown sons (in San Francisco, Richmond VA, and Barcelona) and are raising a puppy for a service dog organization.

**J.A.C. Redford** is a composer, arranger, orchestrator and conductor of concert, chamber and choral music, film, television and theater scores, and music for recordings. Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Joshua Bell, Chicago Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Kansas City Chorale, Los Angeles Chamber Singers, Los Angeles Master Chorale, London Symphony Orchestra, Anne Akiko Meyers, New York Philharmonic, Phoenix Chorale, St. Martin's Chamber Choir, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Utah Chamber Artists and Utah Symphony have performed his work. *All Shall Be Well*, *The Alphabet of Revelation*, *Confessiones*, *Dappled Things*, *Eternity Shut in a Span*, *Evening Wind*, *The Growing Season*, *Inside Passage*, *Let Beauty Be Our Memorial*, and *Waltzing with Shadows* are recordings devoted to his art music. He composed the Raymond W. Brock Memorial Commission for the American Choral Directors Association 2017 National Conference in Minneapolis, MN and collaborated with Bruce Herman and Malcolm Guite to create the multi-disciplinary work *Ordinary Saints*. Redford's 500 episodes of television include multiple seasons of *Coach* and *St. Elsewhere*, for which he was twice nominated for Emmy Awards. He composed the scores for *The Trip to Bountiful*, *Newsies*, and *The Mighty Ducks II and III*, conducted *The Little Mermaid*, and orchestrated the scores for *Avatar*, *WALL-E*, *1917*, *A Man Called Otto*, and *Skyfall*, for which he also arranged and conducted Adele's Oscar-winning title song.

Known for his energetic rhythms, rich harmonic language, and striking colors, award-winning composer **Josh Rodriguez** (b. 1982) continues to gain recognition as an emerging composer and collaborator on a national and international scale. Born in Argentina and raised in Guatemala, Mexico and the United States, Rodriguez's musical imagination has been formed by this bilingual, multi-cultural heritage. He collaborates regularly with theatre and film directors and has received several notable concert commissions in a wide range of musical genres. Rodriguez serves as Associate Professor of Music Theory and Composition at Elmhurst University. He regularly contributes to various arts & culture blogs and is on the Leadership Team of *Deus-Ex-Musica* an ecumenical and interfaith initiative

that brings musicians, clergy, and non-musicians together for concerts and conversations about the intersection of faith and new music. [https:// www.joshrodriguezmusic.com/](https://www.joshrodriguezmusic.com/)

Chicago native **Stephen Uhl** completed his Artist Diploma in Piano Performance at Chicago College of the Performing Arts at Roosevelt University where he studied with Adam Neiman. He is the pianist of the Ostrega Uhl Project, bringing chamber music performances to the Chicagoland area. Past masterclasses include Emanuel Ax and Martin Katz. He has premiered works by Jake Runestad and Jonathan Hannau. Stephen is the Collaborative Pianist at Glenbard East High School, Union Church of Hinsdale, Elmhurst University, and the St. Charles Singers. For more information and full performing schedule, please visit [www.stephenuhl.com](http://www.stephenuhl.com)

Known for her joy, creativity and imagination, multi-instrumentalist **Mary Vanhoozer** fuses artistry with passion in her many musical projects. An avid J. S. Bach enthusiast, her debut solo piano album, *From Leipzig to LA*, features the complete keyboard partitas of Bach, as well as a commissioned piece, *Partita Picoso*, by composer Josh Rodriguez. A versatile performer and melodist, she has also produced albums of original music playing violin, hurdy gurdy, piano, hammered dulcimer, and percussion. Her original music features elements from musical traditions significant to her: celtic, French bal folk, Appalachian folk, and medieval and renaissance music. Mary teaches piano at the Wheaton College School of the Arts and serves as adjunct faculty at Elmhurst University. In her free time she loves to read fiction, bake, and play hurdy gurdy and violin for her local English Country Dance community. She received degrees in piano performance from Wheaton College Conservatory (B.M.), the Eastman School of Music (M.M.), and the Cleveland Institute of Music (D.M.A.).

**Robin Wiper**, an alumna of the Lyric Opera of Chicago Apprentice Program, has had the pleasure of singing all over the world. She made her Lyric Opera debut as Suor Genovieffa in *Suor Angelica* as an apprentice. Her favorite roles with the Lyric have been varied from Papagena in *The Magic Flute* to the pants role of Oberto in *Alcina*. With the Lyric Opera she has also performed the title role of *Lucia* with the Grant Park Orchestra. Ms. Wiper has appeared at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in roles such as Sister Constance in *Dialogues of the Carmelites*, as well as with the New York City Opera both onstage at Lincoln Center title role in *The Cunning Little Vixen* (for which the New York Times declared her ‘a delight...agile of both voice and limb’), and on NYCO’s National Tour in the title role of Marie in *The Daughter of the Regiment*. She was also featured in the role of Margaret in the opera *Lizette Borden* which was broadcast live from Lincoln Center. Other regional opera companies include Indianapolis, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Memphis, and Eugene. She made her European debut at the Spoleto Festival in Italy as Blondchen in Mozart’s *the Abduction from the Seraglio*. In the realm of oratorio, Ms. Wiper has performed with a variety of orchestras, including the National Symphony at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the Atlanta Symphony, and the Birmingham Symphony. Closer to home she has had the honor of working with the Grant Park Symphony, Camerata Chicago, and the Elgin Symphony. Currently, she is coaching and teaching voice out of her home in Wheaton and at Wheaton North High School, teaching Performing Arts at the Greenhouse Christian Co-school, and serves as a Music Ministry Associate at College Church. Robin is married to Steve Wiper, who knows about her former secret life as an opera singer, among other things. They have four children and live in Wheaton, IL.

The **choir** is composed of singers from various choirs, including College Church in Wheaton, Trinity College Deerfield, New Covenant Church, and friends from Elmhurst University:

Michael Akre  
John Black  
Elizabeth Dragomir  
Nina Green  
Stan Green

Ruth Gregornik  
Lee Hoffner  
Theresa Hoffner  
Paige Nowak  
Kristen Page  
Josh Rodriguez  
Ruth Marie Santiago  
Arthur Williams III

### **A Note of Thanks**

This concert would not have been possible without the incredible generosity of our performing artists and composers, many of whom have volunteered their time and talents to be here. Particular thanks go to Jess Lederman, for organising the ‘Setting MacDonald to Music’ competition and funding the prize, and to Josh Rodriguez for his willingness to invest in this concert in various ways. Chuck King has gone above and beyond in his efforts to bring together musicians and take the lead on choir direction—all the time doing so with grace and positivity. We owe him and all those involved an enormous debt of gratitude.