

WEST CENTRAL
SINGERS

PRESENTS

A Garden Of Music

Director Naomi Powers-Baker

Accompanist Karl Stadem

Saturday

April 22, 2023 | 7:00 pm

Faith Lutheran Church

310 Medayto Drive | Spicer, MN

Sunday

April 23, 2023 | 4:00 pm

Calvary Lutheran Church

302 Olena Ave | Willmar, MN

WWW.WESTCENTRALSINGERS.COM



TICKETS AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR | ADULTS \$10 | CHILDREN & STUDENTS FREE!



PROGRAM

Suite Prayers for the Earth.....Bret Hesla/Zach Busch

- I. You For Whom There Is No Adequate Name
- II. Pour Out Upon Us
- III. Fill Us With Peace
- IV. Bring Healing To Our Lives
- V. Teach Us
- VI. We Thank You

The Ground.....Ola Gjeilo

The Ground is considered the culmination of the *Sunrise* Mass. Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo writes, "I wanted to convey a sense of having 'arrived' at the end of the Mass; to having reached a kind of peace and grounded strength."

Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua, Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, Blessed are those who come in the name of the Lord.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
Dona nobis pacem, Grant us peace.

The Seed.....Glyn Lehmann

The composer reverses the familiar saying, "what you reap is what you sow" into "what you plant is what you grow." The purpose is to get people to take responsibility for their own actions and words. It starts with you and me!

We've sung about prayers, the ground and seeds. Now, it's time for...

- Singin' in the Rain.....arr. Mac Huff**
- Blue Skies..... arr. Roger Emerson**
- Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In.....arr. Greg Gilpin**

The Garden Song.....arr. Mac Huff

"Inch by inch, row by row, gonna make this garden grow."

Life is Not a Garden.....Elizabeth Alexander

I could summarize this song as a complex view of the world but that doesn't do it justice. I feel to experience the full effect of this song, we need to know the entire story.

In Elizabeth Alexander's words:

I am not always pleased when life veers in an unforeseen direction.

The high school chorus at Community of Peace Academy had struggled for several weeks to come up with a concept for a piece of music I was writing for them. They'd shared concerns about injustice, poverty, war and prejudice. They'd affirmed strongly held beliefs about family, community, and acceptance. I had just unveiled a somewhat promising first draft based on one of their brainstorming ideas. It had an upbeat tune and a more or less positive message:

*There are flowers, there are weeds. All have blossoms, all have needs,
And a lifetime worth of seeds. This is our garden. This is our home.*

"It's not bad or anything," a skinny young man was saying, trying to be tactful, "but it's just not what I would sing about, personally."

Another student was more direct. "The people in my life always be fighting, disrespecting, judging you. But this song is like 'be happy 'cause everything's fine,' and that's not real life."

I tried not to think about how little time I had to finish writing this song. It's about the process, I told myself. If the process has integrity, so will the finished product.

"I hear what you're saying," I said. "But if the garden metaphor won't work, what will?"

What is life like for you?"

"It's not like anything," came an impatient reply from the back. "Life is just life."

This was not going well. After another ten minutes of faltering communication, I threw my hands into the air.

"Okay, I gave this my best shot, and it looks like I got it wrong. You're going to have to help me out here."

"I don't know," sighed one girl. "But life is not a garden, sunny and bright."

"Okay," I said slowly, "So what else is life NOT like?"

Suddenly there was a question they could answer. We ended the hour with a chalkboard full of ideas, and two days later I showed up with a very different draft. Hard-edged. Blues-inflected.

As I sang the new chorus something in the room woke up. Hands were raised from the back of the room, and students who'd never spoken during brainstorming now put in their two cents. On the way out a student gave me a thumbs up along with the ultimate high school compliment: "You rock."

*The new song was much harder to write than the one I'd originally envisioned. It opened with disillusionment and wandered through anger and betrayal, which meant that I had to pass through those places, too. I was often reminded how slim hope can feel. But by insisting on a darker, more complex view of the world, these young people took me to a multi-layered place I would not have gone had I been left to my own devices. Not only that, but when they premiered *Life is Not a Garden*, they sang it like they meant it.*

INTERMISSION

Octopus's Garden.....arr. Roger Emerson

Down by the Salley Gardens.....arr. Douglas E. Wagner

The Garden of Music.....Mark Patterson

The Garden of Love.....Christopher Cooley

The Garden of Love originated as a poem by William Blake. Composer Christopher Cooley has put the lyrics to music exposing a myriad of emotions in this delicate yet perhaps disturbing poem.

The Mind is a Garden.....Pepper Choplin

Yes, our minds are gardens so plant what is noble, honest and true.

For the Beauty of the Earth.....John Rutter

This Rutter piece has been a favorite for decades. Enjoy!

Thanks for joining us today. Thank you to both Faith Lutheran Church in Spicer and Calvary Church in Willmar for your hospitality.

WEST CENTRAL SINGERS

DIRECTOR – Naomi Powers Baker

Naomi began directing WCS the fall of 2018. She enjoys the excitement and passion of this group. After thirty-two years of teaching music, 30 in the New London-Spicer School District, Naomi is currently the Director of Music Ministry at Calvary Lutheran Church in Willmar, MN. Besides her love of music, Naomi enjoys having fun hanging out with family, friends and dogs.

SOPRANO I

Char Strand, Paynesville
Jean Urban, New London
Sarah Moulton, Morris
Eileen Twedt, Willmar
*Nanette Serbus, Renville
Jeanie Rittenour, Glenwood
Kali Stiles, New London

SOPRANO II

Jill Benson, Willmar
Elaine Boyd, Willmar
Rachel Clark, Kandiyohi
JoAnn Halverson, Willmar
*Kris Swanson, Willmar
Diane Thompson, Pennock

TENOR

Pete Baalson, New London
*Lucas Ford, Willmar
David Frey, Willmar
Roger Kingstrom, Willmar

ACCOMPANIST

Kari Stadem, Willmar

INSTRUMENTALIST

Terry Brau, Spicer

ALTO I

Cynthia Koll Tengwall, Spicer
Naomi Mahler, Willmar
Lisa McBrian, Willmar
Hailey Wolf, Willmar
Kellie Wright, Willmar

ALTO II

Rondi Adams, Willmar
Heather Carver, Spicer
Diana Gertken, Belgrade
Char Kingstrom, Willmar
Laura Molenaar, New London
Carol Sanders, Brooten
Kristen Pierce, Pennock

CONTRALTO

*Donna Brau, Spicer

BARITONE/BASS

*John Benson, Willmar
*Dale Lauer, Spicer
Jim Molenaar, New London
Jeff Tengwall, Blomkest
David Swanson, Spicer
Bill Wright, Willmar

* Denotes Board Member



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