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Concert: Return to Ithaca: Ithaca College Madrigal Singers & Ithaca College Choir

Hana J. Cai

Julianna LoBiondo

Ithaca College Madrigal Singers

Ithaca College Choir

Sean Linfors

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Authors

Hana J. Cai, Julianna LoBiondo, Ithaca College Madrigal Singers, Ithaca College Choir, Sean Linfors, and Ryan Fellman

Return to Ithaca

Ithaca College Madrigal Singers

Dr. Hana J. Cai, conductor

Julianna LoBiondo, graduate conducting assistant

Ithaca College Choir

Dr. Sean Linfors, conductor

Sungmin Kim, collaborative pianist

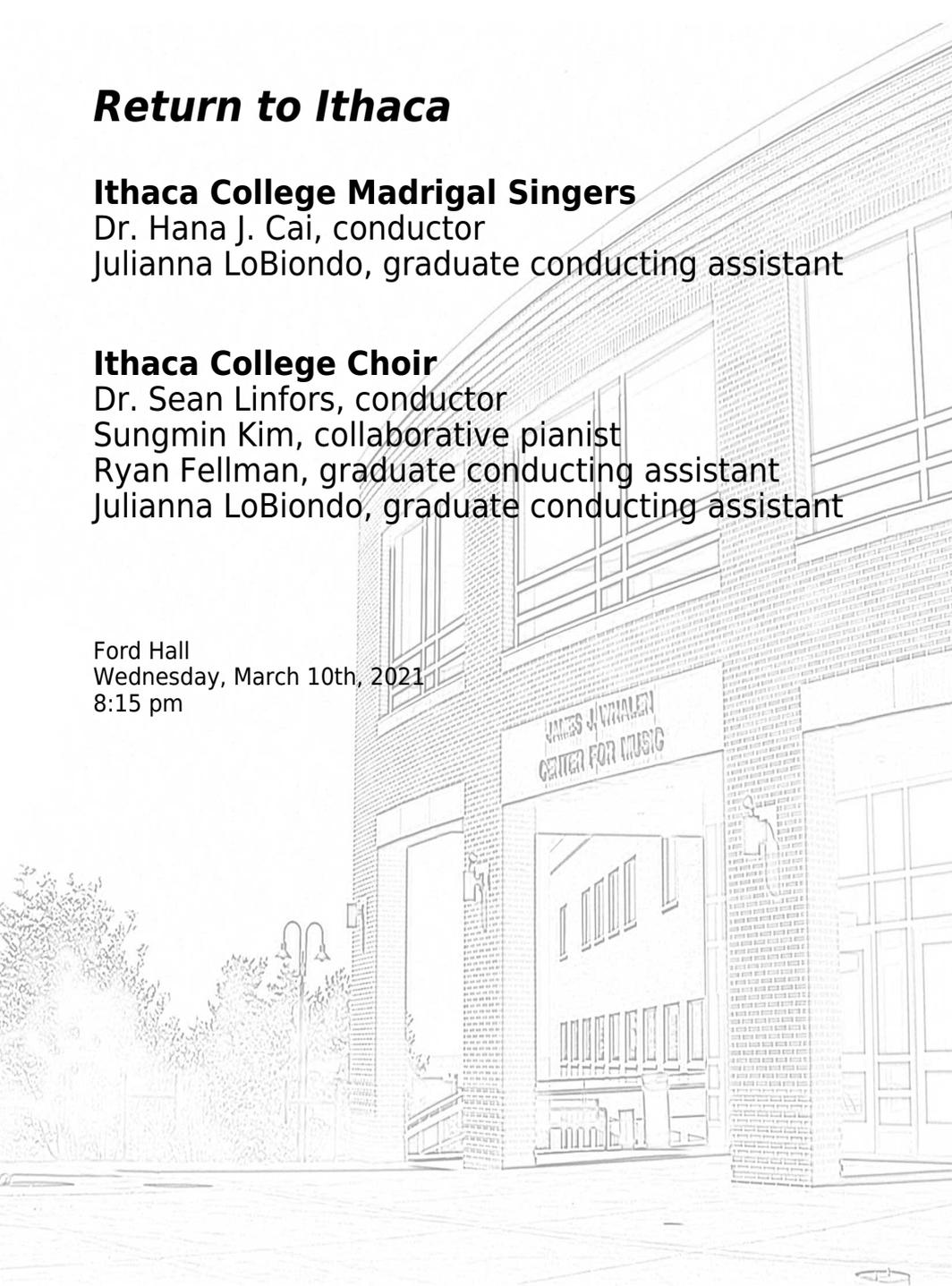
Ryan Fellman, graduate conducting assistant

Julianna LoBiondo, graduate conducting assistant

Ford Hall

Wednesday, March 10th, 2021

8:15 pm



ITHACA COLLEGE

School of Music

Program

Ithaca College Madrigal Singers

Ain't No Mountain High Enough

arr. Anne Raugh
and Deke Sharon

Ithaca College Choir

Abide with Me

arr. Moses Hogan
(1957-2003)

Gospel

Alvin Singleton
(b. 1940)

Jack Hogan, soloist
Amber Ward, soloist

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord

Undine Smith Moore
(1904-1989)

Connor Curry, soloist
Anthony Pilcher, soloist

Abide with Me

*Abide with me, fast falls the even-tide;
the darkness deepens Lord, with me abide;
when other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
I need Thy presence ev'ry passing hour.*

*What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.
In life, in death. O Lord, abide with me. Amen.*

Gospel

*Swing low so I
Can step inside--
A humming ship of voices
big with all.
The wrongs done
done them.
No sound this generous
could fail:
Ride joy until
it cracks like an egg,
Make sorrow
seethe and whisper.
From a fortress
of animal misery
soars the chill voice
of the tenor, enraptured*

*With sacrifice.
What do I see,
he complains, notes
brightly rising
Towards a sky
blank with promise.
Yet how healthy
the single contralto
Settling deeper
into her watery furs!
Carry me home,
she cajoles, bearing
Down. Candelabras
brim. But he slips
through God's net and swims
heavenward, warbling.*

Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord

*Oh, the king cried,
Oh, Daniel, Daniel, oh!
Daniel, Daniel, oh!
A-that-a Hebrew Daniel,
Servant of the Lord!
Among the Hebrew nation,
One Hebrew Daniel was found
They put him in a-the lion's den
He stayed there all night long.
Now the King in his sleep was troubled
And early in the morning he rose
To find God sent a-His angels down
To lock the lion's jaws.*

Notes from the Directors

Another semester, another new way to make music together.

Our return to in-person classes this semester has been influenced by our health and safety measures. We've taken care to keep everyone as safe as is practical, and we've been distanced, masked, and singing only in 30-minute increments. We're being guided by the science, and we're being thoughtful about the way we use our together time.

Though PPE has been forefront in our minds, singing and creating community through music has continued to be our reason. Hearing voices together this last month, harmonizing, blending, adjusting, and strengthening each other, has been a reminder of the fortitude of these students. Their will to make music is strong and inspiring.

Our program highlights a diverse array of choral music - hopefully you'll hear both familiar and unfamiliar pieces. It's been a joy to prepare in our return to Ithaca.

Madrigal Singers

If it seems odd that Madrigal Singers perform a pop song on an otherwise "classical" concert, look to the origins of "madrigals." Their creation stemmed from an interest in using the vernacular language in everyday life instead of Latin, the language of the church. With so many audiences today connecting to pop music more than classical music, is pop music not the musical vernacular?

With amplifying marginalized voices comes acknowledging the Western conservatory's complacency in promoting predominantly white power structures through exclusion. The bias against pop music is one such exclusion. Many practitioners of Western classical music have long turned their noses up at pop music, decrying it as "too simple," frowning at the apparent lack of training needed to perform pop music, or just scoffing at its general popularity. These criticisms suggest a level of elitism required in order to participate in "classical music," which by its nature, excludes people from making it.

These criticisms also pit classical music against popular music, which is, as the old saying goes, "like comparing apples and oranges." Both are music, but they have their own aesthetic values and principles by which they abide. They cannot and should not be compared to one another. In further examining the roots of popular music genres, one also cannot ignore that every single popular music genre in the United States has its roots in Black musical traditions. In this time of inclusion, why do we in the conservatory still hold such a stigma against popular music?

Ain't No Mountain High Enough was written in 1966 by the song-writing duo Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson. The most famous version was recorded by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell, which became a hit single and their signature duet in 1967. It was later recorded by Diana Ross, the lead

singer of The Supremes, in 1970. The "mountain" referred to in the song were New York City's skyscrapers as Nickolas Ashford walked through Central Park, and represented his ambition as a musician. The melody of the opening lines "ain't no mountain high / ain't no valley low / ain't no river wide enough, baby" literally paints the scenery. "High" is on the highest note of the phrase, "low" is on the lowest, and "wide" is the longest note. The chromatic descending line of the verse portrays the anxiety of being apart, before finally making the declaration "Ain't no mountain high enough...to keep me from getting to you" and settling in the key. During this time when so many loved ones cannot be together due to the pandemic, the sentiment of this song is especially poignant today.

Choir

Choir's brief selections include pieces by three prominent Black composers. **Moses Hogan** is probably the most familiar of the three to contemporary choral audiences. His compositions and concert settings of spirituals have been renowned for the last three decades. His professional choir, The Moses Hogan Singers, premiered most of his pieces before they were published. In his arrangement of ***Abide With Me***, Hogan enriches the durable tune with lush voice leading and sensitivity to the text. He sets two of the eight verses but adds a codetta with the terminal line of the poem, "in life, in death, o Lord, abide with me." His surprising harmonic turn at "in death" (G-flat) gives a sense of transcendence to the closing "Amen."

Alvin Singleton is Composer-in-Residence this year for the Ithaca College Composition Department, and though much of his work is instrumental, his choral works are full of an intensity that reveals his attention to the text. His setting of Rita Dove's short poem ***Gospel*** develops rapidly, as Singleton paints each word and phrase with multi-hued homophony. The unique polyphonic line of the piece sets the text "ride joy, til it cracks like an egg." The composer adds each voice part separately, letting each contribute to a rolling and tumbling depiction of that joy, until it is cut short by "make sorrow seethe." *Gospel* is an excerpt of Rita Dove's 1987 Pulitzer Prize-winning book of poems, *Thomas and Beulah*. Dove served as Poet Laureate of the United States from 1993 to 1995.

Undine Moore's 1952 composition ***Daniel, Daniel, Servant of the Lord*** was highly influenced by concert settings of spirituals. It follows the format of strophically presenting an Old Testament story, in this case, the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Tenor and bass solos give heroic shape to the narrative, and the composer uses the spiritual form to great effect.

Personnel

Ithaca College Madrigal Singers

Soprano I

Amelia Paulson
Amber Ward

Soprano II

Sarah Kennedy

Alto I

Maia Finkel

Alto II

Danielle Gurcan
Julia Callaghan

Ithaca College Choir

Soprano I

Syona Ayaankeril
Matisse Boor
Olivia Brice
Asila Folds
Victoria Garritt
Naya Griles
Rachel Huff
Rachel Magil
Danielle Roach
Mary Tehan
Amber Ward

Soprano II

Victoria Brooks
Julia Callaghan
Heather Feigenbaum
Hope Kovera
Jessica Laddin
Alexandria Renna
Carleigh Strange
Isabel Vigliotti

Alto I

Lindsay Cherin
Maia Finkel
Danielle Gurcan
Rebecca Kantor
Alexandra Lombardo
Erin Smith

Alto II

Adrianna Anzalone
Julianna Cavallo
Sophie Denton
Emily Dimitriou
Rebecca Emery
Leah Ethridge
Madison Hoerbelt
Cassandra LaRose *
Julianna LoBiondo
Emily Schulz

Tenor I

Connor Curry
Jack Hogan
Thomas Koo
Simon Lee

Tenor II

Ty'vone Benners
Stephen Costanza
Alex Gutierrez *
Jordan Juliano

Bass I

Logan Chaput
Byron DeLeon
Maxwell Kuhnel
Anthony Pilcher

Bass II

Tynan Butler
Alec Dorris
Ryan Fellman
Nick Jones
Evan Sacco
Tommy Socolof

*Student Teaching Block 3

Biographies

Hana J. Cai is a conductor and music director based in Ithaca, NY. During her time at Indiana University, she was one of three conductors selected to assist with preparing the chorus for a performance of the Penderecki *St. Luke Passion* where the composer was in attendance. She also served as the associate chorus master for the university premiere of Mason Bates' *The (R)evolution of Steve Jobs* and Wagner's *Parsifal* for the Indiana University Bicentennial. In March 2019, Hana was the winner of the ACDA Conducting Competition in Kansas City, MO.

In Philadelphia, Cai served as a music director, accompanist, and vocal coach at Temple University. In Bloomington, she served as the music director for *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* with Indiana University Summer Theatre and the assistant music director under Lawrence Yurman for *Stardust Road* as part of the Indiana University Bicentennial, directed by Susan H. Schulman. Other projects include *The Christians*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and Disney's *Newsies* for Cardinal Stage, Bloomington's professional theater company.

Cai holds a BM in piano performance and a BA in Chinese from the University of Maryland, an MM in conducting from the Eastman School of Music, and a DM in choral conducting from Indiana University. Her dissertation is a diction guide for Mandarin Chinese for singers and conductors. Additionally, she has presented her research on tokenism at the Indiana Choral Directors Association and the ACDA Central and North Central Division Conference in Milwaukee, WI.

Sean Linfors is in his fifth year as the Associate Director of Choral Activities and Assistant Professor of Choral Music Education at Ithaca College School of Music, and is currently serving as Interim Director of Choral Activities. He holds a Ph.D. in Choral Music Education from Florida State University, and is an active conductor, clinician, and educator, as well as being an advocate for access to music education. At Ithaca, Linfors has taught conducting, choral literature, and rehearsal techniques, as well as choral ensembles. He is the Artistic Director of the Syracuse Chorale, and was recently named conductor of the Cayuga Vocal Ensemble.

IC Choral Calendar

Saturday, April 10th | Graduate Conducting Recital
TreCho 7pm | Choir 8:00pm | Ford Hall

Sunday, April 25th | Spring Concert
Madrigal Singers 2:00pm | Chorus 3:00pm | Ford Hall

Saturday, May 1st | Spring Concert
TreCho 7:00pm | Choir 8:00pm | Ford Hall

Tuesday, May 4th | Spring Concert
Campus Chorus Ensemble | 7:00pm | Ford Hall

Special thanks to the following people in the School of Music for making this performance possible:

Keith Kaiser, Interim Dean - Music Education

Ivy Waltz, Interim Associate Dean - Music Performance, Voice

Sheila Ossit, School Operations & External Relations Officer, School of Music

Luke Klingensmith, Webcast Services Coordinator and Social Media Coordinator

Erik Kibelsbeck, Concerts and Facilities Manager, Music

Ithaca College Voice Faculty: Tamara Acosta, Dann Coakwell, Martha Guth, Brad Hougham, Jennifer Kay, Deborah Monthomery-Cove, Sidney Outlaw, Patrice Pastore, Dawn Pierce, Rachel Schutz, Alison Wahl, Marc Webster