

Cells, Planets, Same Thing

Philip Moody, *artistic director*

Vince Peterson, *conductor-in-residence*



Des Moines Choral Festival 2023

Cells, Planets, Same Thing

July 22, 2023

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Vince Peterson, *conductor-in-residence*

To See the Sky Jocelyn Hagen (b. 1980)

Observer in the Magellanic Cloud Mason Bates (b. 1977)

Anne Gassman, Eliza Stucki, Kristen Sullivan, *sopranos*

Joshua Boggs, Susan Falconer, Kaylee Parker, *altos*

Will Kuethe, Drew Young, *tenors*

Noah Reinhuber, Andrew Schroeder, *baritones*

Christopher Lottes, Zachary Brecht, *basses*

We Are... Ysaye M. Barnwell (b. 1946)

Willa Albrecht & Sabrina Del Angel, *soloists*

How To Sing Link a Planet Elizabeth Alexander (b. 1962)

Stars Jeffrey Parola (b. 1979)

Cells Planets Erika Lloyd
arr. Vince Peterson

Joshua Boggs, *soloist*

Missa Sexti Toni Antonio Lotti (1667 – 1740)

IV. Sanctus

V. Benedictus

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INTERMISSION

Helios

Timothy C. Takach (b. 1978)

Prelude: Chaos and Order

I. Pluto (The Border)

II. Neptune (The Storm Was Loose)

III. Uranus (White Silences)

Willa Albrecht & Ella Driver, *sopranos*

IV. Saturn (Longing For Infinity)

Karla Clemens, Andrew Schroeder, & Noah Reinhuber, *trio*

V. Jupiter (A Wife Betrayed)

VI. Comet (Transmigration)

Interlude: With My Face to the Sun

Noah Reinhuber, *baritone*

VII. Mars (Love Asleep and Waiting)

VIII. Moon (Everything is Made of Light)

IX. Earth (Only Here)

X. Venus (Everything Seems Possible)

Anne Gassmann & Kristen Sullivan, *sopranos*

Interlude: Opening Inward

Will Kuethe, *tenor*

XI. Mercury (Move Towards Freedom)

Kellie Motter & Eliza Stucki, *sopranos*

XII. Sun (Perihelion)

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and only here do they kneel in prayer.

Ever since I was a teenager, I was fascinated by space. As a student in middle school I had that set of pictures from NASA with the view of Earth, an astronaut fixing a satellite in orbit, and all the other fascinating views of the universe that we mere earthlings would only experience through the eyes of a telescope. OF course, with new technology comes new insights and opportunities. Anyone else ready to fly into space with me?

In programming this concert, I wanted the wonder and awe of space to be the foundation. I also wanted to provide a partial canvas for you as the listener, so that you could imagine some of the elements in the picture yourself. “To See the Sky” is the beginning of that journey and picture. Jocelyn Hagen has created a simply wonder fun setting of Sara Teasdale’s poetry and I hope you will find it is beautiful and full of imagination as I do. Next, Mason Bates tells us the story of a wandering satellite that catches a glimpse of ancient light from Earth that reveals a look into Earth’s distant past. “Observer in the Magellanic Cloud” depicts this satellite witnessing and the Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, chanting to the Cloud to invoke the power of the stars in order to bring them bountiful food. The rest of the selections in this first half, Vince Peterson, my dear colleague and friend, ingeniously programmed.

Upon returning from intermission, we present *Helios*. This grand choral cycle takes us not only on a musical journey, but on a spiritual journey, and a scientific discovery of each planet in our solar system. I encourage you to take a moment during the intermission to read Tim’s own notes on the work found on pages 8 and 9.

-Philip Moody

Artists

Soprano

Willa Albrecht
Ella Driver
Anne Gassmann
Kellie Motter
Amber Schroeder
Eliza Stucki
Kristen Sullivan

Alto

Joshua Boggs
Rebekah Bridges
Karla Clemens
Sabrina Del Angel
Susan Falconer
Kaylee Parker

Tenor

Tomas Galvan
Will Kuethe
Jacob Mandell
Ben Meyer
Teryl Rice
Zachary Shiraki
Joel Westberg
Drew Young

Bass

Zachary Brecht
Colby Gouchanour
Christopher Lottes
Jonathan Margrave
Noah Reinhuber
Andrew Schroeder
Devon Steve
Adam Triebold
Jakob Ven Huizen



To See the Sky

One by one, like leaves from a tree,
 All my faiths have forsaken me;
 But the stars above my head Burn in white and delicate
 red, And beneath my feet the earth
 Brings the sturdy grass to birth. I who was content to
 be But a silken-singing tree, But a rustle of delight In
 the wistful heart of night, I have lost the leaves that
 knew
 Touch of rain and weight of dew.
 Blinded by a leafy crown I looked neither up nor
 down-
 But the little leaves that die
 Have left me room to see the sky; Now for the first
 time I know
 Stars above and earth below.
 -Sara Teasdale (1884 – 1933)

Observer in the Magellanic Cloud

Tuputuputu atua
 Ka eke mai I te rangi e roa e
 Whangainga iho ki te mata o’te tau e roa e

*Magellanic Cloud, sacred one,
 Mounting the heavens,
 Cause all the new year’s growth to flourish.*
 -Traditional Maori Ceremonial Text

We Are...

For each child that's born
 a morning star rises
 and sings to the universe
 who we are.

We are our grandmothers' prayers.
 We are our grandfathers' dreamings.
 We are the breath of our ancestors.
 We are the spirit of God.

We are
 Mothers of courage
 Fathers of time
 Daughters of dust
 Sons of great vision.
 We are
 Sisters of mercy
 Brothers of love
 Lovers of life and
 the builders of nations.
 We are
 Seekers of truth
 Keepers of faith
 Makers of peace and
 the wisdom of ages.

We are our grandmothers' prayers.
 We are our grandfathers' dreamings.
 We are the breath of our ancestors.
 We are the spirit of God.

For each child that's born
 a morning star rises
 and sings to the universe
 who we are.

WE ARE ONE.

-Ysaye M. Barnwell, from “Lessons”

How To Sing Like a Planet

Let everything unfold in its own time.
 Accept what’s beyond your control.
 Revel in simple harmonic motion.

Turn.
 Rotate.

Get charged up.
 Be weak. Be strong.
 Don’t fight friction.
 Vibrate sympathetically.
 Don’t be afraid to get into a groove.

Let gravity have its way with you.
 Revolve around something luminous.

Wheel, whirl, slide, collide,
 Circle, cycle, amble, gambol –
 Resonate, radiate, innovate, renovate,
 Oscillate, fluctuate, circumnavigate, flow –

Bloom periodically.
 Hunker down when you must.
 Wobble from time to time without apology.

Know that annihilation’s possible any time,
 But expect a bright tomorrow’s coming anyway.
 -Elizabeth Alexander



Stars

How countlessly they congregate
O'er our tumultuous snow,
Which flows in shapes as tall as trees
When wintry winds do blow!—
As if with keenness for our fate,
Out faltering few steps on
To white rest, and a place of rest
Invisible at dawn,—
And yet with neither love nor hate,
Those stars like some snow-white
Minerva's snow-white marble eyes
Without the gift of sight.
-Robert Frost (1874 – 1963)

Cells Planets

So far away
far away
So far away
far away,
when all will
shine
and all will
play
hey.

The stars will open up
and all will be
tiny pieces of galaxy,
reflected in you and me...

Cells,
planets,
same thing...

Bright electric lights
on all the leaves,
and everything
growing from a tree,
water's blood,
and roots are veins.

I don't know you
but I like you,
I don't know you
but I miss you,
I don't know you
but I need
you...

The smallest is
the biggest thing
and in all the world
the love
is the love
from me
to you...
-Erika Lloyd

Missa Sexti Toni Sanctus

Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,
Dominus Deus Sabaoth.
Pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Benedictus

Benedictus qui venit
in nomine Domini.
Osanna in excelsis.

*Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

Helios is a musical exploration of our solar system. The libretto is inspired by the Greek and Roman gods for which the planets are named, the science of each planetary body, and the faith in unanswered questions we have as humans. The idea for this piece was born on a tour with Cantus back in 2013. I was thinking about how to combine my passions together in music, and I thought I should write a choral cycle based on the planets. Over the course of the next 6 years I researched the solar system and started to piece together the libretto movement by movement. I couldn't find the support to fund the whole cycle in one commission, so I started to write individual movements for smaller commissions along the way. In the spring of 2018 I was talking with Matt Culloton about having it on The Singers' 15th anniversary season, even though it wasn't finished or funded. He told me, "if you write it, I'll program it." So I jumped the rest of the way in. At that point I had written four movements, and I would complete a fifth the next fall.

The libretto contains poetry commissioned for this piece alongside translations of ancient writing and previously published poetry. Each movement's text is inspired by the planet for which it is named, and *Helios* itself has an overarching theme of control. In our lives, some things are within our control and others are not. *Helios* asks us to analyze these situations and be active in finding ways where we can choose. We have the choice to point our lives in a certain way, to decide who we want to be and how we want to live.

In "Pluto" we stand at the border of chaos, ready to jump in. Patricia Monaghan has us believe that chaos can be beautiful, that it offers us more exciting choices than control. The music brings us into chaos immediately, each section in their own rhythmic pattern, surging and combining to make something greater.

"Neptune" offers us a familiar story of a father intervening in his two sons' conflict. As a father I can emphasize with Neptune's rage at the chaos his sons are causing, but I also love the description of how he controls them: "He sways their passions with his words and soothes their hearts." A great way to parent. Turbulent trills and glissandi abound as the winds combat each other, and the contrasting homophony later delivers Neptune's words.



Patricia Monaghan's poetry embodies the cold isolation of Uranus. The axial tilt of Uranus is almost parallel to the solar plane, meaning that instead of spinning like a top, it rolls around the sun in its orbit, causing an alternating 42 years of sunlight then darkness at the poles. This isolating coldness is what inspired this poem choice and the paired quote from Shakespeare. So many people feel isolated, alone, unloved, and they feel as if their fate is not in their own hands.

Tony Silvestri uses Saturn as an autobiographical account of his childhood, how he gazed at Saturn and unlocked his wonder for the universe. The movement opens with a solo trio, more intimate and personal than any texture we've heard so far. When the choir enters the heavens crack open, and wonder is upon us. The choir lays down a familiar harmonic progression often found in popular music, rooting this movement here on Earth, but the text explores the many wonders that occur in the heavens.

The title character does not appear in "Jupiter," but instead the movement is sung from the perspective of Juno, Jupiter's wife. Silvestri has written a rage aria with a powerful twist. Instead of only proclaiming her rage, Juno marks Jupiter's beautiful image as his famous red spot - a continuous storm, the largest in the solar system.

In "Comet" Jupiter asks Venus to take the spirit of Julius Caesar and turn him into a star. She agrees and carries his spirit up to the heavens, feeling it transform into a fiery comet. In ancient Rome, Caesar's Comet was seen for 7 days in 44 BC. The repeating glissandi in the bass section are a Shepard tone, giving an unending sense of rising motion. Are we able to control the legacy we leave behind? We cannot transform into a comet, but we can choose what we wish to leave behind, how we want to be remembered.

Writing a piece inspired by Mars offered a much-needed exploration of how we view masculinity. The Roman god of war is usually portrayed in a very aggressive, stereotypically masculine way. To me, the way culture tends to convey traditional masculinity is not usually the truth but a mask we wear to show bravado, toughness and confidence. When the 2004 Mars rover Spirit broke a wheel, it ended up dragging the wheel across the surface of the planet, scratching the surface to discover silica underneath.

This discovery pointed to the fact that hot water once flowed on or under the surface of Mars. It's such a great metaphor for our sense of manliness - that as our outer layer is scarred we reveal something more gentle underneath. Bill Reichard's wonderful poem explores all of this and offers what I think is a more complete honest view of what it means to be a man.

"Moon" has a mysterious feel to it: an exploration of sound, texture and environment. We hear a brilliant sense of light in the climax, even as a mere reflection of the true source.

Like "Saturn," "Earth" is rooted on the ground. While both depict the wonder of the heavens, Newhouse's poem reminds us how special our humanity is. Humans are a product of the only known cradle of life in the universe, and we alone get to experience complex emotion.

Venus has been seen in the night sky throughout most of human history, and in Julia Klatt Singer's words "we feel a strong attachment to her—she rises for you, lingers for you, wants you to see her, notice her, want her to stay in the sky. And since she is the second brightest thing up there, next to the sun, she does linger, stay." Venus orbits in the opposite direction from all other planets in our system, moving against expectations, showing how powerful we can be if we choose.

An interlude illustrates the value of inward growth and change, contrary to the expectation that change is always visible and in a prescribed direction. Self-discovery and awareness lead us into "Mercury," where a limited pitch set opens the piece, eventually yielding to a wide palette of color and harmony. We are in charge of our own limits. We can make the pendulum shift in as many degrees of freedom as we can imagine. In a universe where chaos is beautiful and breeds life, we can still control our own balance and destiny.

The sun is our greatest source of energy. Our journey through the solar system ends as we finally are drawn into its warmth, enveloped in family, community wonder and light. We are home.

- Timothy C. Takach, 2019

Helios

Prelude: Chaos and Order

Chaos was the law of nature;
 Order was the dream of man.
 Chaos often breeds life,
 when order breeds habit.
 -Henry Brooks Adams

I. Pluto (At the Border)

Here is where chaos starts.

It is the fiercest hunger.
 It is a great tearing pain
 that so occupies the mind
 that there is nothing else.

It is being breathed.
 It is being breathless.

Standing on the border
 of chaos means standing
 in a sharp cold wind
 on the highest pass
 in the arctic mountains.

It means plunging
 into stars.
 It means soaring into jade seas.

Here at the border
 we are not in chaos yet.
 This is more relentless
 than chaos. And

more beautiful. Far,
 far more beautiful.
 -Patricia Monaghan
 "Mandelbrot Set: 4. The Border"

II. Neptune (The Storm Was Loose)

Neptune, meanwhile, greatly troubled, saw that the sea was churned with vast murmur, and the storm was loose and the still waters welled from their deepest levels: he raised his calm face from the waves, gazing over the deep. He calls the East and West winds to him, and then says:

"Tantane vos generis tenuit fiducia vestri?
 Iam caelum terramque meo sine numine, venti,
 miscere, et tantas audetis tollere moles?"

*"Does confidence in your birth fill you so?
 Winds, do you dare, without my intent,
 to mix earth with sky,
 and cause such trouble, now?"*

So he speaks, and swifter than his speech, he calms the swollen sea, scatters the gathered cloud, and brings back the sun. He sways their passions with his words and soothes their hearts: so all the uproar of the ocean died, as soon as their father, gazing over the water, carried through the clear sky, wheeled his horses, and gave them their head, flying behind in his chariot.

- Virgil: Aeneid I lines, 124-156 (edit),
 trans. A.S. Kline, PoetryInTranslation.com

III. Uranus (White Silences)

Beyond geography. Beyond blood.
 Beyond latitude. Beyond salt.

Beyond continents. Beyond tears.
 That kind of coldness.

My hair is beaded with crystals.
 Forgetful and aloof, I am slipping

into white silences, becoming
 cold skin over hard finality.
 - Patricia Monaghan, "White Silences"

It is the stars,
 The stars above us, govern our conditions.
 -William Shakespeare, King Lear, 4.3.32-33

IV. Saturn (Longing for Infinity)

When I was nine years old,
 I first looked through a telescope,
 And what I saw astounded me:
 Floating in the inky black,
 The orb of Saturn, like a pearl,
 Encircled in its perfect rings.
 So small it seemed, and yet as large
 As almost a thousand Earths;
 So close, and yet so very far way.

The sight awoke in me
 A longing for infinity
 And all its wonders:
 The spinning planets, burning stars;
 Galaxies of endless worlds
 Hurling headlong through the void;
 The many-colored nebulae—
 Graveyards of exploded stars,
 And nurseries of the new;
 The universe extending
 In ever-widening spheres
 Of color, light, and energy;
 An endless source of wonder and humility.

This journey through infinity
Began for me when I first beheld
The icy rings of Saturn
From a field on Earth
That summer evening
When I was nine years old.
-Charles Anthony Silvestri

V. Jupiter (A Wife Betrayed)

Look at him.
Just look at him.
Smug and fat, pompous, preening,
Rolling about in bedsheets
Of orange and scarlet satin,
Surrounded by his paramours—
Io and Europa,
Iocaste and Eurydome,
Leda, Adrastea,
Callisto, Themisto—
[Even S-2010-J2, that slut!]
So many I can't even count
Or care to remember.
And yet, I do remember.

Look at him.
He cares little for my honor,
Even less for my feelings.
I am his lover! His wife! His queen!
And yet no planet wanders named for me!
No stately Juno to glide about the sun,
Wrapped in swirling clouds of rose and silver grey...
Alas, that is not to be,
For Jove takes all.
Attracts all.
Rules all.

But I am Juno,
Mighty Queen of gods and men,
And I demand my due!
I shall be a tempest,
Red and roiling like an angry sore,
Digging into his tender side—
A bright red spot to spoil his splendor,
A reminder of the ageless rage
Of a wife betrayed.
So, look at him!
All who gaze at him,
From now until the ending of the worlds,
Shall see only me!
-Charles Anthony Silvestri

VI. Comet (Transmigration)

Then Jupiter, the Father, spoke..." Take up Caesar's
spirit and change it into a star... He had barely
finished, when gentle Venus stood, seen by no one,
and took up the newly freed spirit of her Caesar
from his body, and preventing it from vanishing
into the air, carried it towards the glorious stars. As
she carried it, she felt it glow and take fire, and
loosed it from her breast: it climbed higher than
the moon, and drawing behind it a fiery tail, shone
as a star.

-Ovid: Metamorphosis,
trans. A.S. Kline, PoetryInTranslation.com

Interlude: With My Face to the Sun

I wish to leave the world
By it's natural door;
Do not put me in the dark
I am good, and like a good thing
I will die with my face to the sun.
-José Martí, excerpt from "A Morir"

VII. Mars (Love Asleep and Waiting)

A solitary planet spins alone
But never alone
 There are moons
 There are stars
A silent man lives alone
But never alone
 There are voices
 There are songs
Under the rocky surface
 There is ice
 Where once was water
Under the cold hide
 There is ice
 But also blood
A lonely planet spins amidst
 The endless celestial bodies
 The vast potential of space
A single man can never be lonely
 If he's a son, a father, a brother
 If he's a husband, a friend, a lover
Peel back the planet's skin
 And find water, waiting, for the sun
Peel back the body's fierce façade
 And find love, asleep, and waiting
-William Reichard

VIII. Moon (Everything is Made of Light)

The moon translates a rhythm
of this night that knows no breath.
Everything is made of light.
The whole world is glowing.
-William Reichard,

IX. Earth (Only Here)

My skies blaze and dazzle with ice,
lava burns in my veins.
All the glories of the gods are here—
but no gods gave me their name.

Mars may boast about war,
but only here are there blades,
and only here blood-stained soil.

Venus may preach on love,
but only here does an eye meet an eye
and whole new heavens are born.

Only here is there spring,
only here the breath of the rose.
Only here is there miracle, suffering, awe—
and only here do they kneel in prayer.
-Brian Newhouse

X. Venus (Everything Seems Possible)

What is life with nothing to contain it?
Shore or edge of night, first rising star
For you
Her favorite word is linger
For her
Bliss is the blackest sky
The way she lights it
With her beauty.
When the sea became the sea
She moved like she still moves
In the opposite direction
Towards that something
To define her, beyond
which everything seems
possible.
-Julia Klatt Singer

Interlude: Opening Inward

I am, at this moment, walking in a direction you
cannot imagine, you who judge everything in
terms of forward motion, you who imagine me
unmoving, waiting as you pass through my world
like a brilliant burning comet, leaving faint
periodic traces in a spiral galaxy: I am opening
inward, spiralling towards nothingness and truth,
moving in no direction you can imagine, opening
like an expanding universe with no unmoving
point within it.

-Patricia Monaghan, excerpt from
“Nothing is Ever Simultaneous”

In my breast are the stars of my fate.
-Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller

XI. Mercury (Move Towards Freedom)

a pendulum can only swing
(no matter how fast how slow)
can only swing in that small space
(no matter how fast how slow, no matter)
it can only swing
one degree
one degree of freedom,
that is what it is called,
that limit cycle,
(back & forth, no matter
back & forth, fast and slow):

one degree of freedom

But there is a way to get more
there is a way to move
there is a way to reach
infinite degrees of freedom:

move towards chaos,
move towards change,
move towards turbulence
there are so many degrees of freedom
there are so many degrees
uncounted uncountable
a rolling ring of freedom
so many degrees of freedom
this close to chaos
-Patricia Monaghan
“Degrees of Freedom”

XII. Sun (Perihelion)

Dr. Philip Moody is the Artistic Director and Founder of CORO and Co-Director of the 3-Summer MM in Choral Conducting offered through Simpson College and CORO. He is the Artistic Director of the Des Moines Choral Festival and the Associate Conductor of GRAMMY®-nominated True Concord Voices & Orchestra. Moody's discography includes over 20 commercial recordings including True Concord's GRAMMY®-nominated recording of Stephen Paulus choral works. He has served as Director of Choral Activities at Clayton State University and Associate Director of Choral Activities at University of Georgia.

While earning his Doctorate of Musical Arts under Dr. Bruce Chamberlain, Dr. Moody was the winner of the 2011 ACDA graduate conducting competition, participated in the 2011 Conducting Masterclass with Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival, and was awarded both the Creative Achievement Award and the Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award in the College of Fine Arts at the University of Arizona. Prior to Tucson, he was the Schissler Conducting Fellow at the Moores School of Music: University of Houston. While there he was the Associate Conductor for the Moores Opera Center and the Moores School Orchestras; he received a Master of Music degree in orchestral and opera conducting. He received a Master of Music degree in conducting and in voice from the University of New Mexico and received his Bachelor of Music in Sacred Music/Voice from Saint Olaf College. His mentors include Helmuth Rilling, Bruce Chamberlain, Anton Armstrong, Bradley Ellingboe, Richard Bado, and Franz Krager.

Dr. Moody is a bass/baritone hailed as "exceptional and vibrant, with good control and feeling." He was a co-founding Artistic Director of the professional male vocal ensemble Cantus. He has sung for Robert Shaw, Sir David Willcocks, John Fiore, Robert Spano, Phillippe Jordan, and Ole Kristian Ruud; he has performed with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, The Minnesota Orchestra, The Tucson Symphony Orchestra, Santa Fe Pro Musica, and The Santa Fe Symphony. Dr. Moody has performed with the choruses of Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Arizona Opera and performed several seasons with True Concord, Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Cantare Houston, and Houston Chamber Choir.

Hailed by The New York Times, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Brooklyn Eagle, Time Out New York, and I Care If You Listen, **Vince Peterson** is regarded as one of his generation's most influential choral conductors. A recipient of Chorus America's Louis Botto Award for Innovative Action and Entrepreneurial Zeal, an honor held by only 19 conductors in history, Peterson is the Founder of Choral Chameleon, a three-armed vocal music company based in New York City, known for its radical, forward-thinking concert programming and unexpected interdisciplinary collaborations. He holds a BM in Composition from The San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied with celebrated composer Conrad Susa, and a double MM in Composition and Choral Conducting from Mannes College of Music in New York, where he was the recipient of the New York Music Teacher's League Award. An eight-time commissioned composer for the multi-GRAMMY® award-winning ensemble, Chanticleer, Peterson's arrangements have been heard worldwide and have become staples of the American choral music repertoire, garnering nearly 3 million YouTube views across multiple handles. Peterson and his compositions have appeared in many distinguished performance venues, including Chicago Symphony Hall, San Francisco's War Memorial Opera House, Bartok National Concert Hall in Budapest, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Carnegie Hall. In addition to his work as a conductor and composer, he enjoys a vibrant teaching practice in multiple schools and independent programs. He is proud also to serve as Artistic Director of Empire City Men's Chorus. His recorded work appears on the PARMA/Navona Record label. He is also a proud DMA candidate at Shenandoah University Conservatory of Music. A recognized thought leader in the music world, The New York Times called Peterson "authoritative beyond his... years." The Brooklyn Eagle praised his work as "a stunning symphony of the spiritual and secular" while hailing him as a solo performer "with depth and vigor" who "provided a universal context which resonated with his audience."

CORO is inspired by the desire to foster the development and enhancement of choral music in ways that enrich and excite the souls of vocalists, audience members, and communities.

The CORO Vocal Artists are comprised of professional vocalists from around the United States. The Vocal Artists engage in live performances and recordings throughout the year. A major focus of the ensemble includes the summer residency with Simpson College and the Des Moines Choral Festival. During their residency, the Vocal Artists present full-length concerts led by our Artistic Director, Associate Director, additional guest conductors, and by graduate choral conductors currently pursuing their Master of Music through the unique 3-Summer MM in Choral Conducting program offered in partnership with Simpson College. Finally, the Vocal Artists are the core of the CORO Summer Festival Chorus, a multi-generational ensemble of local Des Moines musicians, brought together to present some of the larger choral repertoire during the festival.



www.coroonline.org/coro-vocal-artists

Music at Simpson College and **CORO** are excited to partner and offer the Master of Music (M.M.) degree in Choral Conducting. Achieved over three consecutive summer terms, this NASM-accredited program allows choral educators or others working in the choral field an opportunity to complete the M.M. degree while continuing to teach and pursue their professional endeavors during the academic year.

The three-summer Master of Music in Choral Conducting program at Simpson College is a unique plan of study that combines the academic rigor of a traditional graduate program with generous podium time for each student in lab and performance settings with the CORO Vocal Artists, a professional vocal ensemble whose roster contains professional artists from across the United States.

Conducting experience during the summer consists of rehearsal and performance podium time each week. Students participate in rehearsals with the CORO Artists and conduct performances for the Des Moines Choral Festival. They explore new music in the Composer's Institute and sing in festival performances including a masterwork for chorus and orchestra.

Graduate students receive extensive podium time with a highly-trained ensemble in rehearsal and concert settings.

The partnership with CORO allows all graduate students generous podium time in front of the CORO Vocal Artists in order to complete their conducting and recital requirements. Performances led by the graduate students take place during the Des Moines Choral Festival.



The Fifth Annual Choral Festival

Simpson College and CORO are pleased to present the fourth annual Des Moines Choral Festival! Vocalists from across the United States come together to sing concerts this July. The concerts are led by members of the Choral Faculty at Simpson College and graduate students studying in the College's 3-Summer MM in Choral Conducting.

Artistic Staff



Philip Moody
artistic director



Matthew Oltman
associate director



Timothy A. McMillin
conductor-in-residence



Amy Voorhees
conductor-in-residence



Vince Peterson
conductor-in-residence



Kellie Motter
Vocal Pedagogy/Diction