

Welcome to Rocky Mountain Chorale's Fall Concert!

Founded in 1978, Rocky Mountain Chorale (RMC) is one of the Boulder area's oldest and finest community choirs. Thank you for joining us.

As we gather, we acknowledge that we are on the ancestral homelands and unceded territory of Indigenous Peoples who have traversed, lived in and stewarded the lands of Boulder County. The Indigenous Nations include the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Ute and many other Native American nations who were removed unjustly, and that we in this community are the beneficiaries of that removal. We honor them as we gather here to engage as a community and work toward healing and develop a culture of inclusion through music.

Please silence your cell phones and other electronic devices during the concert.

Thank you.

Support RMC

RMC has been a source of joy, inspiration, and community for nearly 50 years. Our work isn't possible without the generous support of donors like you. Every contribution – of ideas and imagination, of time, energy, and resources – is a crucial part of our success. Your generosity helps us move our community forward in tangible, exciting, and lasting ways. Please consider giving a gift to support RMC.

Individual donations can be made by scanning the QR code below or visiting our website (www.rockymtnchorale.org).



Rocky Mountain Chorale is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions are tax deductible.

Rocky Mountain Chorale Artistic Staff

Jimmy Howe, Director



Jimmy was born and raised in Denver, Colorado. He began piano lessons at age seven after his parents heard him picking out tunes on the family piano. Jimmy began singing in high school after being urged to audition for the fall musical; he began singing in choir the next year and has remained in love with the choral experience ever since.

Jimmy received his B.A. in Music from Concordia University, where he studied piano with Ms. Patricia Riffel and conducting with Dr. Michael Busch. He received his Master's Degree in choral conducting and literature from CU Boulder, where he studied with Dr. Gregory Gentry and Dr. Andrea Ramsey.

Jimmy has performed with the Denver Gay Men's Chorus, the Collegium Musicum Early Music Ensemble at Regis University, and has conducted and sung with numerous church choirs throughout the Denver area. He currently teaches at Skyline High School. Jimmy's excitement for choral music is unyielding, and he believes the future holds unlimited potential for singing communities and their ability to enhance the human experience.

Parker Steinmetz, Assistant Director



Born in Greeley, Colorado, Parker began his musical journey as a clarinet player, though he quickly transitioned to the saxophone. He began singing in his church's choirs in high school under the direction of Dr. Elmer Schock, and it was Dr. Schock's nudging that inspired Parker to choose music as his college major.

Parker attended Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, where he studied saxophone under Dr. Debra McKim. After being coerced into auditioning for the Hastings College Choir, he quickly realized choral music was his true passion. He found a wonderful mentor in the choir's director, Dr. Fritz Mountford.

Since moving back to Colorado in 2005, Parker has been an active church and community musician. In addition to directing several church music programs in northern Colorado, he has performed in the Greeley Chorale, the Greeley Chamber choir, the Kream of the Krop big band, and as a guest musician with Montview Westminster Choir for their performance of Dvorák's Mass in D. He has performed under the direction of many fine conductors including Dr. Jill Burleson Burgett, Dr. Galen Darrough, Dr. Howard Skinner, and Dr. René Clausen. Parker is currently the Music Ministry Director at Longs Peak United Methodist Church in Longmont, Colorado. He joined the Rocky Mountain Chorale in January of 2022.

Walton Lott, Accompanist



For over a decade, Walton Lott has explored and performed a diverse range of musical styles, from early Baroque music to works by contemporary composers. Deeply interested in different historical and social dimensions of musical practices, Dr. Lott holds certificates in Historical Keyboard Performance, Music Theory Pedagogy, and Musicology from the University of North Carolina at

Greensboro. This entails rigorous and flexible interpretations of works on period and modern instruments that draw from coeval performance treatises and writings about aesthetics and music theory. The philosophical goal of these efforts is to craft a performance that presents the listener with a historically-contextualized reading of the musical score while also showcasing a unique individual interpretation of the work.

Simultaneously, Dr. Lott champions “newer” works, be they Modernist, avant-garde, Minimalist, or works by current composers, and has studied and performed works by Olivier Messiaen, Frederic Rzewski, Steve Reich, Julia Wolfe, Sean Friar, Carl Schimmel, Gyorgy Ligeti, Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and others.

In addition to solo music, Dr. Lott has long been a participant in collaborative music, playing for a wide range of ensembles and genres of music, including: church choirs, chamber music, orchestral ensembles, chorale ensembles, vocal and instrumental soloists, and jazz and rock ensembles.

Dr. Lott holds a Bachelor’s Degree from Millsaps College, where he studied under Dr. Lynn Raley and Dr. Rachel Heard. In 2012, Dr. Lott completed a Master’s Degree in Music at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, studying under Dr. Andrew Willis, and has completed his Doctorate of the Musical Arts at the same institution.

Rocky Mountain Chorale Members

Soprano 1

Eileen Christofferson
Emily Cogsdill
Sarah Frank
Anna Hansil
Megan Rogers
Christie Swoboda
Marilyn Scott
Roberta Shanahan
Alix Vezina
Katherine Ware-Wolniewicz
Ady Zavala

Soprano 2

Nathalie Bleuzé
Ruth Bleuzé
Claire Douglas
Susan Duncan
Linda Hattel
Heather McLaughlin
Christina Schappacher
Elizabeth Tyson

Alto 1

Riven Evenson
Dianne Ewing
Pam Guthrie
Sade Gutierrez
Chelsea Haag-Fernandez
Melissa Johnson
Zoe Lewis
Amanda Paolucci
Beth Reid
Pam Sjoerdsma
Gini Sykes
Alicia Yoho

Alto 2

Isabella Becker
Nancy Belkov
Susan Bryant
Jeanne Clifton
Betsy Feldman
Julie Hale
Cathy Jenni
Caren King
Sharon Laroque
Cécile Penland
Pamela Puhl-Quinn
Linda Wegner

Tenor 1

Benji Archer
Sean Goralski
Robin Guthrie
Ellen Henderson
James Lockhart
Nathan Varghese

Tenor 2

Denver Alexander
Jack Doggett
Bill Liggett
Phil Weber

Baritone

Reed Bailey
Rolan
Christofferson
Kaden Downey
Sam Hahn
Jack Harless
Tom Hunt
John Lee
Ben Lewis
Keiran McGee
Kelly McKee
Willem
O'Reilly

Bass

M.J. Dougherty
Paul Hartman
Bob Hopper
Erik Jensen
Terry Mattison
Tom O'Brien
Dennis Pelton
Justice Wiley

Things That Never Die

Jimmy Howe, conductor Parker Steinmetz, assistant conductor
Walton Lott, pianist

Measure Me, Sky	Elaine Hagenberg
Responsibility	Mark Sirrett
Wanting Memories	Ysaye Barnwell
Time	Jennifer Lucy Cook
I Had No Time to Hate	Nathan Howe
Invictus	Joshua Rist
<i>Soloists:</i> Anna Hansil and Sarah Frank	
<i>Cello:</i> Sean Goralski	

– Intermission –

TwainSong	Andrea Ramsey
Things That Never Die	Lee Dengler
I Believe	Mark Miller
<i>Soloist:</i> Emily Cogsdill	
Hold Fast to Dreams	Susan Labarr
Over the Rainbow	arr. Mark Hayes
Bayanihan	Arianne Abela

Director's Notes

In light of the weighty, contemplative nature of RMC's most recent concerts, I wanted this concert to be a bit more inspiring and uplifting overall. I originally described my goal for this concert to be "words to live by;" a concert full of words that could act as guides for inspiration, reflection, awe, and words that would uplift performer and listener alike in acknowledging and pursuing their own unlimited human potential. As a result, this concert is a combination of words that I have lived by and that RMC have sung previously, as well as new words in new songs that have challenged, comforted, and inspired me. These songs are indeed words to live by, but they are also words to share, and we are thankful for the opportunity to do so with you this evening.

Our concert begins with Elaine Hagenberg's **Measure Me, Sky**, an expansive and breathtaking setting of the poem by Leonora Speyer. The language of the poem is expansive, pushing the reader beyond their current station. The composer describes the piece in her own words:

Poetry is often the inspiration for the music I compose. Each piece begins by carefully studying the words, speaking the rhythms, and listening for melodies that will help to convey a story. I want singers and audiences alike to see themselves inside the music—guided by the melodies and the text as one.

The effect of the poetry in *Measure Me, Sky!* is instantaneous. It's as if one's arms have been cast wide, and their eyes turned to the heavens to take in the expanse both around and above. By opening with accented arpeggios that immediately rise into billowing triplet figures, I wanted to launch singers into flight and invite listeners into the same breathless exclamation.

I was also inspired to learn that Leonora Speyer first started writing poetry in her forties—not as a young girl. By composing an ascending key change for the final refrain, a new harmonic world is revealed, calling us to venture into the unknown to discover our limitless potential.

The most important line in the text is "I have been little so long." After acknowledging our smallness and, possibly, stuckness, we are invited to reach, stretch and soar on wings of loveliness.

After realizing our smallness and imploring the world to stretch us beyond our limits, our concert turns to a moment of introspection. Big realizations require big questions of ourselves if we intend to transcend what has kept us "little so long," questions like, "*Why* have I been little so long?" "*What* got me to this point?" "*What* got me *stuck*?" Written in both Hebrew and English, Mark Sirret's **Responsibility** poses three crucial questions that challenge the reader to move beyond themselves: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? And if not now, when?" Judith Clurman, editor of the "Rejoice: Honoring the Jewish Spirit" choral music, writes:

Hillel the Elder, a famous Jewish leader and scholar, was born in Babylon. He lived in the first century BCE to the beginning first century CE. He was a Pharisaic leader of the most prominent school of Torah interpretation. Many of Hillel's teachings are found in *Pirkei Avot* (Chapters of the Fathers) in the *Mishnah* (early 3rd century compilation of Oral Law). In this aphorism, Hillel captures the tension between the need for healthy narcissism (self-care) and the importance of caring for others — without procrastinating.

Mark Sirret's setting of these words is set in a folk-like idiom that is simple, yet expressive, as a means to capture the humble, inner questioning of the text.

If you've watched or read any of the Harry Potter stories, you have no doubt encountered the concept of a pensieve, a magical wizarding device designed to hold the memories of a witch or wizard's choosing. Once a memory is stored, an individual can plunge their head into the pensieve to revisit their memories as an observer in the third person. Ysaye Barnwell's **Wanting Memories** feels like this sort of moment. Her words speak to the power of relationships and how those relationships form and shape who we become as people. Those who we call friends, including our parents, influence us in ways that shape a new perspective through which we can view the world if we can only take the time to look. The musical material is extremely repetitive but not pedantic; each repetition feels like a re-examination of a stored memory from new perspectives. The text at the beginning grieves the loss of a loved one, proclaiming that "now I need you, and you are gone," like a person standing outside of the magical pensieve. About halfway through the piece, the tone shifts to one of fond remembrance as the speaker recalls the words and wisdom that live on despite the loss of their loved one, as if they have jumped into an old memory and are reminded of the continued connection to those we've lost through the love that they've given us.

Regarding the people (and puppies) that I love the most, I like to say that there's always enough time for them and never enough time with them. Jennifer Lucy Cook's **Time** echoes this sentiment through a frantic flurry of never-ending sixteenth notes and a poem that rolls on despite the loss of words as the piece progresses. The composer describes the piece in her own words:

Time, like money or borders between one country and another, is one of those funny human-made concepts that dictate our lives but are fundamentally meaningless if we didn't all agree to go along with it. And yet, we experience aging, the changing of seasons, and growth, undeniably. The line between time's reality and its invention is blurry, and there was no better way I could think of to depict that than by writing a repeating lyric that erodes as the piece unfolds. As lyrics disappear, phrases take on new meaning, like the way a 30th birthday differs from a fifth birthday, or how old memories can appear sharper than yesterday's. We lose time when we try to keep it, we spend time as we try to save it – and since it insists upon eluding us, we can only notice the fact that time has been winging at us all along. This wit, this relentlessness, and this freedom is the spirit behind Time, and this piece is my way of winking back.

One of my favorite bands from the 2010's was a group from the UK called Noah and the Whale. Their lead singer and songwriter had a tremendous way of crafting words that hit the heart through the innocuous and accessible delivery of indie rock music. One of my favorite songs of theirs is called "Give a Little Love." My favorite lyric comes at the end of the song: "

Well, if you are (what you love) / And you do (what you love) / I will always be the sun and moon to you /
And if you share (with your heart) / Yeah, you give (with your heart) / what you share with the world is
what it keeps of you."

I still regularly listen to this song because it reminds me of how full life can be when it's filled with love. When I'm faced with a tough choice, the words remind me to choose with love because, ultimately, love is how I participate in eternity since love is what the world keeps of me. Set to a poem by Emily Dickinson, Nathan Howe's **I Had No Time to Hate** expresses a similar sentiment and an equal charge to pursue love. The poet states that life isn't big enough to hold hate, nor is it long enough to fill with love, but since something must be done with our time, love is big enough to fill the time we have.

In my own pursuit of growth and self-discovery, I've come across a mindset teacher who frequently uses this line of questioning when working with a client:

“What is a story made of? Words. And where do those words live? In our heads. If that’s the case, why don’t we change the words?”

I love this line of questioning because, well, he’s right, and as someone who frequently gets spun up in their own internal narrative, his questions have given me a tool to make a more productive space between feeling something and taking action. When my students are preparing for an important audition, I like to remind them of Brene Brown’s research on the emotions of nervousness and excitement from her book “Atlas of the Heart.” She explains that the *physical feelings* in our bodies for these two emotions are identical: the jittery feelings, butterflies, the tight muscles, and the anticipation of what’s next. I remind my students that they can feel nervous *and* excited at the same time. They can tell themselves they are nervous because they care, because they want to do well, because they’re auditioning for strangers, and because they *really* want the opportunity. They can tell themselves they can be excited because they have a chance of earning an awesome opportunity, because they love to sing or perform, and that they are the only person with their unique voice and life experiences – they have something to offer a song/role that only they can do, and that is to be celebrated. The words we talk to ourselves with *matter*, but we often default to the narratives that we’ve repeated or inherited and we ultimately become trapped in the stories we tell ourselves.

The first half of our concert closes with a setting of the poem **Invictus** written by William Ernest Henley, a man who refused to compound his physical suffering by repeating to himself how dire his situation truly was. Joshua Rist, the composer of this setting of Henley’s poem, writes:

William Ernest Henley fought a lifelong battle for his health, contracting tuberculosis of the bones as a child that necessitated the amputation of his left leg below the knee. When the disease later spread to his other leg and his doctors insisted on removing it as well, Henley challenged their diagnosis and sought a second opinion. His pursuit led him to meet Dr. Joseph Lester, a pioneer in the development of antiseptic surgery. After an arduous twenty-month hospital stay at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Henley’s leg was saved and his health—at least partially—was restored. During his confinement, he recorded his impressions in his collection of poems *In Hospital*. It was there he penned his most famous work, *Invictus* (Latin for “invincible,” or “unconquerable”).

As crippling as Henley’s struggle with disease was, it is apparent that it did not get the best of him. Friends described him as radiant, larger-than-life-character, with a great red beard, clever wit, and “a laugh that rolled like music.” 19th-century poetry critic Arthur Symons wrote, “Mr. Henley, [out] of all the poets of the day, is the most strenuously certain that life is worth living, the most eagerly defiant of fate, [and] the most heroically content with death.”

— Intermission —

I like to joke and tell my singers that my love language is sarcasm. As someone who considers themselves fluent in said language, I resonate well with the comical writing of Mark Twain. We open the second half of our program with **TwainSong**, a group of six miniatures set to six of his satirical aphorisms. In a concert program full of words to live by, Andrea Ramsey’s settings of these words remind me not to take myself too seriously.

I have always loved Lee Dengler’s **Things That Never Die** and have been eager to find an opportunity for RMC to sing it. The song is set to a poem by Charles Dickens, but I’ve recently learned that this attribution is inaccurate and that it has been attributed to Ebenezer Cobham Brewer. This said, the most likely author was Sarah Doudney, an English fiction writer and poet alive at the same time as the aforementioned men (believe me when I say that this created quite the rabbit hole of origin pursuit...). The misattribution is likely due to the shared motifs/morals of enduring humanitarianism that permeated the works of Charles Dickens. In addition, poems of the 19th century were widely copied and distributed in

anthologies and newspapers of the time and authorship errors were quite frequent. Regardless of the true authorship, the words of this poem attempt to make tangible the things that are intangible, but that leave impressions on the soul: the pure, the bright, the beautiful that moved our hearts, the outreached hand, the wakening of love. Perhaps it's correct to say, as the soul is intangible, so are the things that move it? We can't touch, smell, see, or always hear the things this piece references, but we can undoubtedly *feel* them.

Continuing in the theme of "intangible yet real," we continue our concert with Mark A. Miller's **I Believe**. This music is set to an anonymous poem inscribed in a cellar wall in Cologne, Germany, where Jews were hidden from the Nazis in World War II. In times of trial, words of hope are often the only things that can get us through. The poet states that they believe in the sun, God, and love even when it seems these things are not present. That just because we cannot see them and feel them doesn't mean they don't exist. Miller's setting of these words is simple, yet powerful, much like the poem itself. It begins with a simple statement of the melodic motif and expands in dynamic as the poem progresses.

Hope is the central theme to the second half of our concert, and we continue to examine it with the words of Langston Hughes. Hughes was a pioneer of "jazz poetry;" he sought to portray the real lives of African-American people—both the joy and the suffering—in a way that was authentic and accessible. This poem was written during the Harlem Renaissance, a time in which many African-Americans sought to move from the South to Northern cities in an effort to escape Jim Crow Laws. The message of Hughes' poem is both universal and specific; it is a rallying cry for the community to maintain hope ("hold fast to dreams") in the face of adversity. Susan Labarr's setting of **Hold Fast to Dreams** echoes the sentiment of the author with a melody that withholds resolution until its final note, implying that dreams must be sustained and pursued until they are fully realized.

With the knowledge that dreams are worth our pursuit, our concert continues with Mark Hayes' arrangement of **Somewhere Over the Rainbow**. Originally featured in "The Wizard of Oz," the lyrics to this song imply a longing of what *can* be in spite of *what is*. In our previous song, Langston Hughes admonishes the listener to "hold fast to dreams" so they don't die, but in this song, Dorothy urges us to follow those dreams to where they might inevitably lie, regardless of the intended outcome. While the end of the rainbow is never really within our reach, the lyric "If happy little bluebirds fly beyond the rainbow, why can't I?" urges the listener to pursue their dreams to whatever end may result. The salient popularity of this beloved melody hinges on two ideas according to composer Rob Kapilow. He explains that "there's really only two ideas. One of them, I call leap. The other one, I call circle and yearn." The opening leap of an octave is quite rare for popular music and producers were fearful that the song would not be marketable due to the technical requirements this leap demands of the voice. This leap also represents Dorothy's yearning for two worlds, for home and for adventure. Kapilow continues, "The only other idea is circle and yearn. So, you start on a note, you circle back to it, and then you yearn. That's it, circle and yearn." The remainder of the melody consists of three leaps, each smaller than the last and resolving closer and closer to the "home" note of the chorus.

Until this moment we have recognized many important "words to live by:" words that inspire, comfort, grieve, remind, and stretch. Ultimately, these kinds of words are best shared in community where everyone can find a safe place to feel and express them. To this end, Arienne Abela's **Bayanihan** serves as a perfect culmination of all that we've sung about in our concert this evening. In her words:

Bayanihan is derived from the Filipino word "bayan" meaning nation, town, or country. This term refers to a Filipino tradition where people in a town or community are asked to help a relocating family. The relocation is not just belongings but the actual transfer of a house to a new location. To thank people, the family throws a party with food and dancing. Today, *bayanihan*, in spirit means helping others in need without expecting anything in return.

Ultimately, the words and moments we choose to share with the people around us matter. Whether colleague, friend, or family, we have the opportunity and charge to uplift ourselves and our compatriots with words that inspire, challenge, and stretch us to become the best version of ourselves. Our hope is that you have been inspired to change, grow, and discover through the words that we have shared with you tonight. Go, make music, and make the world a better place with your voice in it!

Thank You!

The Rocky Mountain Chorale would like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals and organizations for their generous contributions.

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We gratefully acknowledge our donors!

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