

PROGRAM NOTES
QUINCY SYMPHONY CHORUS
March 7, 2020
Compiled by Dr. Carol Mathieson

Spirit of the Winding Water incorporates Navajo rhythms and phrases into a prayer that captures Native American awareness of the sacredness of the natural world. Respect for the spirituality in Native American philosophy guided Rev. Ronald W. Cadmus as he crafted the text and suggested the chant-like motifs and timbres which Robert S. Cohen adopted and adapted for chorus and traditional instruments.

Shenandoah began life among French Canadian voyageurs, who sang as they paddled their canoes between trading stations. The name refers to a famous First Nations chief, but the reference blurred as *Shenandoah* was sung by boatman on American rivers and as a sea chanty aboard Yankee clippers.

All Aboard is a medley of two showstopper train songs composed by Harry Warren in the 1940's for movies and radio. *Chattanooga Choo-Choo*, written for the Glenn Miller band, won RCA Victor's first ever gold record in 1942. *On the Atchison, Topeka and the Santa Fe* remained a huge recording hit for Judy Garland long after its debut in the movie *The Harvey Girls*. Lyricist Johnny Mercer, co-founder of Capitol Records, also recorded it but never mentioned that the actual train never went to many of the places mentioned.

Set down Servant brings together African-American tradition with 2 of the most important forces of mid-20th century choral music to provide a jaunty arrangement of a spiritual that bubbles up from rhythmic chant into frenetic shout dance before ending in a bluesy wind down. Published in the Fred Waring choral series and arranged by Robert Shaw in 1946, *Set Down Servant* instantly became and continues to be a choral classic.

Home on the Range immediately brings to mind cowboys, bison, and campfire singing with harmonica... nostalgia for the Old West. Originating as the poem "My Western Home" in 1872, it became the state song of Kansas in 1947 and joined the ranks of Top 100 Western Songs of All Time in 2010. Many singers have recorded it, from Gene Autry, who epitomized the cowboy of the Old West, to Bing Crosby, who did not. Its recognition value also made it a great vehicle for parody, and it even featured on Broadway in "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown." It was also covered in cartoons by Porky Pig and Bugs Bunny.

Amazing Grace recounts poetically the personal conversion of Rev. John Newton from a wildly headstrong captain of a British slaver ship to an Anglican priest who established one of the earliest schools for children of poor lace factory workers in the village of Olney in the 1770's. Recognizing as grace the joy that came to him when he realized that people must be held in esteem rather than servitude, he rededicated his life to advocating for those in poverty and slavery. *Amazing Grace* had no designated tune until 1835 when American shape note hymn publishers paired it with the familiar Appalachian folk melody "New Britain." In this pairing, the hymn adapts powerfully to many traditions, be they African-American gospel or Scottish bagpipe.

Witness comes from the African-American spiritual tradition and functions not only as an acknowledgement of the power of God, but as a reminder of what people in the stories of the Bible did to demonstrate that power. The language is simple, the story is streamlined. But the call to declare for God is clear.

Ching-a-ring Chaw originally existed as a minstrel song with racist references, but composer Aaron Copland revised it to keep the vibrant syncopations and dance feel an acceptable part of American folk tradition. Song and dance numbers with nonsense syllables during dance moves dated far back into medieval European musical history, the best-known being the fa la's in *Deck the Hall*. In this Copland arrangement, you'll find yourself Ching-a-ring toe-tapping, as well.

100 Years of Broadway is a snippet selection of songs which have defined American musical theatre. Tonight, QSC focuses in on the post-WWII years with Rodgers and Hammerstein, Irving Berlin, Frank Loesser, and Burton Lane. See how many songs you recognize...and how many you could sing along with because you know all of the words.

Someone to Watch Over Me and **A Gershwin Panorama** move the time frame a little earlier to the Roaring 20's and to the sophisticated syncopations of the brothers Gershwin. In this devil-may-care era before the stock market crashed, instead of realistic, topical drama of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* or *Oklahoma!*, theater-goers popped champagne corks to such frothy shows as *Girl Crazy* and *Strike Up the Band*. As soon as shows opened in any of these decades of the early 20th century, dance club bands grabbed the songs and turned them into jazz standards. How many do you recognize?

Hooray for Hollywood and **Cinemagic** celebrate the wonderful popular songs that came from movies. Johnny Mercer's words spoof the stars of the '30's in the movie *Hotel*, but *Hooray for Hollywood* still calls to mind cinematic glamour and glitz, even at Academy Awards presentations. How appropriate, then, for QSC to salute several best song category award winners. Here are the winning movies. Can you name the song that took the Oscar from each as the QSC sings it? *Here Comes the Groom*, *Swing Time*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Little Mermaid*, and *Jaws*.

City Scapes brings together popular songs about American cities in a medley arranged by commercial composer Pete Schmutte, who also directed the University of Indianapolis Crimson Express. This jazz ensemble only does original arrangements—no covers. Thus the theme from *New York, New York* and the popular songs *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*, *Kansas City*, and *Chicago is My Kind of Town* get a modern twist.

Satin Doll was Duke Ellington's sign-off at almost every performance. He composed it with Billy Strayhorn as a piano piece that he played himself and which instantly became a jazz standard. Johnny Mercer wrote words for it, but only after it became a huge hit. **Java Jive** appeared in the movie *In This Our Life*, but Drake and Oakland wrote it in 1940 for jazz clubs. Mostly a paean to coffee, it has '40's references (Mr. Moto was a movie spy) and was recorded by The Ink Spots and Guy Lombardo; but it had a huge popular revival in the 1970's in a vocal jazz version by the Manhattan Transfer.

Don't You Worry is Stevie Wonder's '70's Latin street jive anthem to optimism. Highly innovative in incorporating electronics in his day, Stevie Wonder played the moog synthesizer on his recording of *Don't You Worry* to emphasize the prominent, driving bass line. The song shot to the top of the charts and was covered by many artists from Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, and the UK as well as the US.

You've Got a Friend, a soft rock '70's song by Carole King, celebrates the value of steadfast friendship and has been called an antidote to loneliness and depression. QSC's arrangement is by Mac Huff, who arranges movie and theater music for Hal Leonard publishing company.

Give Me Your Tired raises Emma Lazarus' moving words of welcome to outcasts, engraved on the base of the Statue of Liberty, to greater emotional heights in this musical setting by Irving Berlin for the show *Miss Liberty*. QSC then immediately segues into Julia Ward Howe's stirring call to defend freedom, truth, and liberty for all in the **Battle Hymn of the Republic**.