

Liberty University School *of* Music

presents

Liberty University Chamber Singers

Dr. Thomas Lerew, *conductor*

March 24, 2026

Center for Music and the Worship Arts

Concert Hall

7:30 PM

Liberty University Chamber Singers

“All Praise Be to Thee”

Dr. Thomas Lerew, *conductor*
Ms. Karissa Juhas, *accompanist*

Program

O Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord	Emma Lou Diemer (1927-2024)
Ubi Caritas	Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)
Five Hebrew Love Songs	Eric Whitacre (b. 1970)
	Ruth Smirnov, <i>soprano</i> Miriam Thompson, <i>violin</i>
Chanson de Matin, Op. 15 no. 2	Edward Elgar (1857-1934)
	Miriam Thompson, <i>violin</i>
Exultate Deo	Alessandro Scarlatti (1600-1725)
The Road Home	Stephen Paulus (1949-2014)
	Eve Hodges, <i>soprano</i>
And Can It Be?	Dan Forrest (b. 1978)
Amazing Grace	John Newton (1725-1807) <i>arr. E.W. Stradtman III (b. 1933)</i>
God So Loved the World	John Stainer (1840-1901)
Ride the Chariot	Traditional <i>arr. William Henry Smith (1908-1944)</i>
	Sarah Bromke, <i>soprano</i>

Liberty University Chamber Singers

Program (cont.)

O Love		Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)
Panis Angelicus		César Franck (1822-1890)
	Sarah Bromke, <i>soprano</i> William Dykes, <i>baritone</i>	
Hosanna to the Son of David		Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625)
Let My Love Be Heard		Jake Runestad (b. 1986)
Blessed Assurance		Traditional
	Miriam Thompson, <i>violin</i>	
Jubilate Deo		Joseph Twist (b. 1982)
Loch Lomond		Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
	David Dorris, <i>tenor</i>	
Light of a Clear Blue Morning		arr. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)
	Ruth Smirnov, <i>soprano</i> Miriam Thompson, <i>violin</i>	
Alleluia		Elaine Hagenberg (b. 1979)

- PROGRAM NOTES -

O Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord

Emma Lou Diemer was a prolific American composer whose career spanned both sacred and secular genres, with a particular emphasis on accessible choral music. Composed in the late 20th century, “O Come, Let Us Sing unto the Lord” sets portions of Psalm 95 and 96, texts traditionally used in Christian liturgy as a call to worship. The psalm begins with an imperative to sing joyfully to God, reflecting the communal nature of praise. Diemer’s setting captures this spirit through rhythmic vitality and clear melodic contours, employing mixed meter and syncopation to mirror the exuberance of the text. Harmonically, the piece blends tonal stability with occasional dissonance, reflecting Diemer’s modernist leanings while remaining singable for choirs. Theologically, Psalm 95 emphasizes both celebration and reverence, transitioning from joyful praise to a solemn warning against hard-heartedness. Diemer’s musical interpretation focuses on the opening verses, highlighting the joy and unity found in worship. Her compositional style often integrates elements of minimalism and neoclassicism, and this work is no exception, balancing repetition with development.

Ubi Caritas

“Ubi Caritas” is a setting of a traditional Latin antiphon associated with the Maundy Thursday liturgy in the Roman Catholic Church. The text, dating back to the early medieval period, emphasizes the presence of God in acts of charity and communal love. Ola Gjeilo, a Norwegian-born composer known for his cinematic and lyrical style, composed this piece in the early 21st century. His setting is characterized by warm, consonant harmonies and a flowing melodic line that evokes a sense of peace and intimacy. The text reads, “Where charity and love are, God is there,” reflecting the Johannine tradition which emphasizes love as the defining mark of Christian fellowship. Gjeilo’s music embodies this through meditative atmosphere, often using sustained chords and gentle voice leading. Historically, the “Ubi Caritas” chant was sung during the washing of feet, symbolizing humility and service. Gjeilo’s version does not replicate the Gregorian melody but instead reimagines the text in a contemporary harmonic language. The piece is often performed in both liturgical and concert settings, appreciated for its emotional depth and accessibility. Gjeilo’s broader choral output reflects a fusion of sacred tradition and modern aesthetics, making his work popular among choirs worldwide.

*Where charity and love are, God is there.
The love of Christ has gathered us together.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Let us revere and love the living God.
And from a sincere heart
let us love one another.
Amen.*

Five Hebrew Love Songs

“Five Hebrew Love Songs” is a song cycle composed by Eric Whitacre in 1996, with texts written by his wife, Hila Plitmann, in Hebrew. The poems reflect personal moments and emotions, ranging from playful affection to deep longing. Whitacre scored the work for soprano, violin, and choir, creating a chamber-like texture that allows for intimate expression. Each movement is distinct in character, using modal harmonies, lyrical melodies, and rhythmic variation to reflect the emotional content of the text. Historically, Hebrew poetry has a rich tradition in both religious and secular contexts, and these texts draw from that lineage while remaining contemporary and personal. The use of Hebrew connects the work to Jewish cultural and linguistic heritage, though the themes of love, beauty, and human connection are universal. Whitacre’s compositional style blends traditional choral techniques with modern harmonic language, often incorporating extended chords and cluster voicings. The violin part adds a layer of expressivity, sometimes echoing the vocal line and other times providing contrast. The cycle has been widely performed and recorded, appreciated for its emotional immediacy and musical craftsmanship.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Five Hebrew Love Songs (cont.)

I. Temuná (“A picture”)

*A picture is engraved in my heart;
moving between light and darkness:
A sort of silence envelopes your body,
and your hair falls upon your face just so.*

II. Kalá kallá (“Light bride”)

*Light bride
she is all mine,
and lightly
she will kiss me!*

III. Lárov (“Mostly”)

*“Mostly,” said the roof to the sky,
“the distance between you and I is endlessness;
But a while ago two came up here,
and only one centimeter was left between us.”*

IV. Éyze shéleg! (“What snow!”)

*What snow!
Like little dreams
falling from the sky.*

V. Rakút (“Tenderness”)

*He was full of tenderness;
she was very hard.
And as much as she tried to stay thus,
simply, and with no good reason,
he took her into himself,
and set her down
in the softest, softest place.*

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Chanson de Matin, Op. 15, No. 2

Edward Elgar's *Chanson de Matin* ("Morning Song") is one of the composer's most graceful and warmly expressive miniatures. Written in 1899 and originally conceived for violin and piano, the work later appeared in several arrangements, including Elgar's own orchestration. Though brief, it captures a radiant sense of freshness and optimism that mirrors the quiet beauty and promise often associated with the beginning of a new day.

The piece unfolds in a gently flowing melody that rises naturally over a light, dance-like accompaniment. Elgar's lyrical gift is evident in the violin's singing line, which seems to breathe with warmth and serenity. Rather than dramatic contrasts, the work invites the listener into a calm atmosphere of elegance and light, evoking the stillness of morning gradually giving way to joyful activity. Its graceful phrasing and subtle harmonic turns reveal Elgar's ability to express deep feeling through simplicity.

The reflective character of *Chanson de Matin* naturally calls to mind the biblical imagery of morning as a symbol of renewed mercy and hope. Scripture reminds us that "His mercies are new every morning" (Lamentations 3:22–23), and that God's faithfulness greets each day with fresh grace. In this spirit, Elgar's gentle "morning song" can be heard as a musical meditation on the quiet assurance that accompanies the dawn—a reminder of the peace and renewed strength that accompany each new day.

Exultate Deo

Alessandro Scarlatti was a leading figure in the Italian Baroque, known for his operas and sacred music. "Exultate Deo" is a motet composed for liturgical use, setting Psalm 81:1, which calls the faithful to rejoice in God. The work exemplifies the Baroque style through its use of counterpoint, melismatic vocal lines, and rhythmic vitality. Scarlatti's setting features imitative entrances and clear tonal architecture, reflecting the influence of developing traditional harmony in polyphonic texture. The motet likely served as part of a larger liturgical celebration, possibly tied to Marian feasts or other solemnities. Scarlatti's sacred works were often commissioned by churches and chapels in Naples and Rome, where he held prominent musical posts. His music bridges the Renaissance tradition of modal writing with the emerging tonal system of the Baroque. "Exultate Deo" remains a staple of choral repertoire due to its clarity, energy, and historical significance.

*Rejoice to God our helper:
sing aloud to the God of Jacob.*

The Road Home

Stephen Paulus's "The Road Home" is a choral arrangement of a traditional American hymn tune known as "Prospect," originally found in the Southern Harmony hymnal of 1835. The text, written by Michael Dennis Browne, speaks of returning to a place of spiritual rest and belonging. Paulus's setting features a solo voice supported by rich, consonant harmonies that evoke a sense of longing and peace. The piece reflects the American sacred music tradition, particularly the shape-note singing style that flourished in the 19th century. Theologically, the text emphasizes themes of grace, redemption, and the soul's journey toward divine presence. Paulus's arrangement preserves the simplicity of the original melody while enhancing its emotional impact through careful harmonic choices. The work is often used in memorial services and reflective concert programs due to its poignant message. Paulus was known for his ability to blend traditional hymnody with contemporary choral techniques, and "The Road Home" is a prime example of this synthesis. The piece has become one of his most beloved compositions, frequently performed by choirs across the United States.

And Can It Be?

Dan Forrest's setting of "And Can It Be?" is a dramatic choral arrangement of the hymn of the same title by Charles Wesley, first published in 1738. The hymn text explores the mystery of divine grace and Christ's sacrificial love and emphasizes justification by faith, the incarnation, and the believer's union with Christ. Forrest's musical interpretation begins with a contemplative introduction and builds to a triumphant climax, mirroring the theological arc of the text. The original hymn was written in response to Wesley's conversion experience and reflects the evangelical fervor of the Methodist movement. Forrest employs dynamic contrasts, rich harmonies, and expressive phrasing to underscore the emotional and theological weight of the lyrics. The piece includes both homophonic and brief polyphonic sections, allowing for textual clarity and musical variety. Forrest's arrangement is scored for choir and piano, with optional orchestration available, making it adaptable for various performance contexts. His compositional style often blends traditional hymnody with cinematic elements, creating a sound that is both reverent and expansive. "And Can It Be?" remains a powerful musical statement of faith and continues to be performed in both sacred and concert settings.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Amazing Grace

Few hymns have shaped Christian worship as deeply as “Amazing Grace.” The text was written in 1772 by John Newton, whose own dramatic conversion to faith in Christ profoundly shaped the hymn’s message. Newton had previously worked in the transatlantic slave trade, but after encountering the transforming grace of God he eventually became a pastor and abolitionist. His hymn reflects the biblical truth that salvation is not achieved through human effort but is a gift of divine grace extended to undeserving sinners.

The opening line echoes the central message of Ephesians 2:8–9: “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Newton’s testimony mirrors the biblical theme of radical spiritual transformation. Like the Apostle Paul, who once persecuted the church before becoming one of its greatest missionaries (1 Timothy 1:12–16), Newton recognized that the depth of God’s mercy is most clearly seen when it rescues those who know their own spiritual need.

The familiar imagery of blindness and sight reflects Jesus’ language in John 9 and Luke 4:18, where the coming of Christ brings spiritual illumination to those who were previously unable to see the truth of God. The hymn’s verses trace the journey of the Christian life—from conversion to perseverance—culminating in the promise of eternal life. The well-known line “Through many dangers, toils, and snares I have already come” recalls the assurance of God’s sustaining presence throughout life’s trials (Psalm 23; Romans 8:28).

Arranger Stradtman’s choral treatment preserves the simplicity and congregational spirit that have made the hymn beloved for centuries while expanding its expressive range for choir. The enduring power of “Amazing Grace” lies in its clear proclamation of the gospel: that God’s mercy reaches sinners, transforms lives, and secures an eternal future with Him.

God So Loved the World

“God So Loved the World” comes from Stainer’s larger sacred work *The Crucifixion*, first performed in 1887. The text is drawn directly from John 3:16–17, among the most widely recognized and theologically central passages in Scripture: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” Within the biblical narrative, these verses summarize the heart of the gospel—God’s initiative in sending Christ to accomplish redemption for humanity.

Stainer’s setting reflects the humility and clarity of the text itself. Unlike many dramatic moments within *The Crucifixion*, this movement is marked by restrained lyricism and transparent choral writing. The music unfolds gently, allowing the words to remain central. Long, flowing phrases and warm harmonic progressions create an atmosphere of reverence and contemplation, inviting listeners to reflect on the magnitude of divine love revealed in Christ’s sacrificial death.

The theological message of the text connects directly with the broader testimony of Scripture. Romans 5:8 declares, “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” The cross stands as the ultimate expression of God’s love—an act not motivated by human merit but by divine mercy. Likewise, the promise that “whoever believes in Him should not perish” points to the assurance of eternal life through faith in Christ alone (John 5:24; 1 John 5:11–13).

In performance, Stainer’s setting serves as a quiet moment of reflection on the central truth of the Christian faith: that salvation originates in the love of God, is accomplished through the sacrifice of Christ, and is offered freely to all who believe. Through its simplicity and sincerity, the music invites both singers and listeners to contemplate the depth of that love and the hope it offers to the world.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Ride the Chariot

“Ride the Chariot” is a traditional African American spiritual arranged by William Henry Smith in the early 20th century. Spirituals originated during the era of slavery in the United States and often conveyed messages of hope, resistance, and faith through coded language and biblical imagery. This spiritual references the chariot as a symbol of divine deliverance, drawing from the story of Elijah’s ascent to heaven in a fiery chariot (2 Kings 2:11). Smith’s arrangement includes a solo voice and SATB choir, using call-and-response techniques and syncopated rhythms to reflect the gospel tradition. The piece is structured to build momentum, with dynamic contrasts and rhythmic drive enhancing its celebratory character. Theologically, the song affirms the promise of salvation and the believer’s readiness to be taken home to glory. Smith’s harmonization blends classical choral techniques with the stylistic elements of Black sacred music, preserving the authenticity of the spiritual while adapting it for concert performance. The work reflects the resilience and creativity of African American musical heritage, which has profoundly influenced American music. “Ride the Chariot” is frequently performed in choral programs and remains a powerful expression of faith and cultural identity. Its enduring popularity speaks to its spiritual depth and musical vitality.

O Love

Elaine Hagenberg’s *O Love* is a lyrical meditation on the sustaining power of divine love in the life of the believer. The text draws from a prayer by the seventeenth-century devotional writer George Matheson, whose writings often explored the steadfast and unfailing nature of God’s love even amid suffering and personal loss. Hagenberg’s musical setting reflects this theme through expansive melodic lines and warm harmonic colors that gradually unfold with a sense of quiet assurance.

The central idea of the text resonates deeply with the biblical portrayal of God’s love as both the foundation and the sustaining power of the Christian life. Scripture repeatedly affirms that love originates in the character of God Himself: “God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him” (1 John 4:16). The text’s imagery of resting in divine love echoes Christ’s invitation in Matthew 11:28–30 to come to Him for rest. Rather than depicting love as fleeting emotion, the piece reflects the biblical understanding of love as covenantal, sacrificial, and steadfast.

Several passages of Scripture illuminate this theme. Romans 8:38–39 proclaims that nothing in all creation can separate believers from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Similarly, Psalm 36:7 describes God’s love as a refuge: “How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings.” Hagenberg’s music captures this sense of refuge through its gentle pacing and expressive shaping of phrases, allowing the choir to embody the text’s movement toward surrender and trust.

The concluding musical gestures suggest both confidence and peace. The believer’s hope ultimately rests not in personal strength but in the unchanging character of God’s love revealed through Christ’s redemptive work (Ephesians 3:17–19). In this way, *O Love* becomes both a prayer and a proclamation—an affirmation that divine love remains constant through every season of life and anchors the soul in the promises of God.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Panis Angelicus

“Panis Angelicus” (“Bread of Angels”) is one of the most beloved sacred melodies composed by César Franck. The text originates from the hymn *Sacris Solemniis* written by the medieval theologian Thomas Aquinas for the Feast of Corpus Christi. The Latin text reflects on Christ as the heavenly bread given for the nourishment of God’s people. The phrase *panis angelicus fit panis hominum*—“the bread of angels becomes the bread of men”—expresses the wonder that the provision of God comes down to meet humanity in its deepest spiritual need.

The imagery of bread carries deep biblical significance. In the Old Testament, God sustained Israel in the wilderness through manna from heaven (Exodus 16), demonstrating His faithful provision for His people. Jesus later draws upon this imagery when He declares in John 6:35, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” This statement reveals that the ultimate spiritual nourishment offered by God is found not in physical bread but in Christ Himself. Through His life, death, and resurrection, Christ provides the true sustenance that gives eternal life.

Franck’s musical setting reflects the reverent and contemplative character of the text. The melody unfolds with simplicity and tenderness, supported by rich harmonic language that was characteristic of Franck’s late Romantic style. Rather than dramatic contrast, the music emphasizes warmth, devotion, and quiet wonder. The gentle arc of the melody allows the text to remain central, inviting listeners to meditate on the mystery of God’s gracious provision.

The theological message ultimately points to the redemptive work of Christ. Just as physical bread sustains life, Christ offers the spiritual nourishment that sustains the soul. His sacrificial offering provides forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and the promise of eternal life (John 6:51; 1 Peter 2:24). In this way, *Panis Angelicus* serves as a musical reflection on God’s gracious provision in Christ—the One who satisfies humanity’s deepest spiritual hunger and invites all who believe to share in the life He gives.

*The bread of angels
becomes the bread of men;
The bread of heaven
puts an end to all symbols.
O wondrous thing!
The poor, the servant,
and the humble may partake of their Lord.*

Hosanna to the Son of David

Orlando Gibbons, one of the most distinguished English composers of the early 17th century, wrote *Hosanna to the Son of David* during the flourishing of the Anglican choral tradition under the reigns of James I and Charles I. As a Gentleman of the Chapel Royal and organist at Westminster Abbey, Gibbons produced anthems marked by vibrant counterpoint, expressive clarity, and finely crafted vocal textures. This anthem, among his most celebrated, exemplifies the rich, jubilant sound world of late Renaissance English church music.

The piece is structured as a concise but exuberant verse anthem, unfolding in imitative entrances that build toward full, resonant homophonic declarations. Its energetic rhythmic profile and cascading “Hosanna” motifs create a musical procession, mirroring the movement and excitement of the biblical scene. Gibbons skillfully combines polyphonic vitality with moments of unified proclamation, giving the work both motion and majesty.

The text comes from the Triumphal Entry narrative (Matthew 21:9), where the crowds welcome Jesus into Jerusalem as the promised Son of David. Theologically, the anthem celebrates Christ’s kingship and messianic identity, echoing the joy and anticipation of Palm Sunday. Through its brilliant counterpoint and exultant cries, Gibbons’s setting invites worshippers to join the ancient chorus that heralds the coming of the King.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Let My Love Be Heard

Jake Runestad composed *Let My Love Be Heard* in 2014 for Choral Arts Northwest and the UMKC Conservatory Singers, setting a poignant text by English poet Alfred Noyes from his poem “A Prayer.” The piece rose to international prominence following the 2015 Paris attacks, when the Cal State Long Beach Choir performed it in memory of student Nohemi Gonzalez—a recording that resonated widely for its raw emotional power.

Musically, the work is notable for its clarity of text and expressive pacing. Runestad structures the piece in four primary sections after a brief introduction, moving from subdued homophony to increasingly expansive textures. The third major section is especially striking: the sopranos and altos sustain continuous triplet figures while the tenors and basses revisit the opening harmonic progression, creating a layered, intensifying atmosphere that heightens the emotional arc of the poem.

The repeated plea—“Let my love be heard”—serves as the work’s central expressive anchor. Through its carefully shaped dynamics, transparent harmonies, and persistent motivic repetition, Runestad crafts a musical landscape that captures the poem’s themes of longing, grief, and the human desire to be heard and understood.

Jubilate Deo

Australian composer Joseph Twist—renowned for his versatility across film, television, and concert music—composed *Jubilate Deo* in 2009 for Paul Holley and the Australian National Choral Association Honour Choir. Twist’s choral writing often blends rhythmic vitality with accessible melodic writing, and *Jubilate Deo* has become one of his most frequently performed works both in Australia and internationally. The piece sets the traditional Latin text of Psalm 100: “Jubilate Deo, omnis terra...” (“O be joyful in the Lord, all the earth”).

Structurally, the work unfolds through a series of overlapping ostinati—short, repeated musical ideas that interlock to form a propulsive, dance-like texture. Twist’s use of syncopated rhythms, pentatonic modal writing, and world-music influences from Africa and Latin America heightens the celebratory character of the text. A striking middle section features a key change and a newly introduced bass motif, which energizes the ensemble and drives the piece toward its exuberant conclusion.

Theologically, Psalm 100 is one of Scripture’s most direct calls to joyful worship—an invitation for all nations to enter God’s presence with gladness (Psalm 100:1–2). Twist’s vibrant setting captures this spirit of communal praise, turning the ancient text into a contemporary musical celebration of gratitude, joy, and the thrill of lifting one voice together before the Lord.

*Be joyful in the Lord, all lands;
serve the Lord with gladness,
and come before his presence with a song,
for the Lord he is God.*

Loch Lomond

Ralph Vaughan Williams was a central figure in 20th-century British music, known for his interest in folk traditions and sacred music. His arrangement of “Loch Lomond” is based on a traditional Scottish ballad that dates back to the 18th century. The song tells the story of two friends separated by war, with one taking the “high road” and the other the “low road,” a metaphor for life and death. Vaughan Williams’s setting preserves the simplicity of the original melody while enriching it with modal harmonies and expressive phrasing. The piece features a solo tenor voice supported by choral accompaniment that enhances the emotional narrative. While not explicitly sacred, the song’s themes of love, loss, and reunion resonate with theological concepts of sacrifice and eternal life. Vaughan Williams was deeply influenced by Anglican hymnody and often infused his arrangements with spiritual undertones. His use of modality reflects his interest in early English music and contributes to the timeless quality of the piece. The arrangement is structured to highlight the contrast between the solo and ensemble, creating a dialogue that mirrors the song’s emotional tension.

- PROGRAM NOTES -

Light of a Clear Blue Morning

Originally written and performed by Dolly Parton, *Light of a Clear Blue Morning* has become one of her most enduring and uplifting songs, celebrated for its message of hope, renewal, and emotional resilience. Craig Hella Johnson's acclaimed a cappella arrangement brings these qualities into the choral realm with exceptional sensitivity. His setting opens with an exposed solo soprano line, creating an intimate and contemplative atmosphere before gradually unfolding into a rich, full-ensemble texture.

Johnson carefully shapes the musical architecture by layering voices incrementally, allowing the piece to build toward a radiant, resonant climax. The expanding vocal harmonies, coupled with carefully sculpted dynamics, convey a sense of emerging clarity—mirroring the song's image of a bright morning after darkness. The arrangement eventually relaxes into a gentle, reflective conclusion, preserving the song's quiet confidence and emotional transparency.

Parton's original melody is preserved with sincerity, while Johnson's choral writing enhances its expressive impact through lush harmonies, warm timbral shifts, and thoughtfully paced crescendos. The result is a stirring musical journey that captures the promise of fresh beginnings—an anthem of encouragement and forward-looking optimism transformed into a luminous choral soundscape.

Alleluia

Elaine Hagenberg's *Alleluia* is a vibrant a cappella setting of a brief but profound text by St. Augustine: "All shall be Amen and Alleluia. We shall rest and we shall see... Behold our end which is no end." Commissioned for the Gustavus Choir, the work exemplifies Hagenberg's signature "eloquence and ingenuity," qualities that have earned her international recognition and performances in prestigious venues worldwide.

Musically, *Alleluia* is characterized by its buoyant 7/8 meter and rhythmic vitality. The opening section bursts with energy, propelled by crisp articulations and forward momentum. A contrasting middle section expands into long, flowing lines supported by lush harmonies, creating a striking shift in color and expressive depth. These broader textures lead the music into a series of ascending key changes, culminating in a radiant, climactic conclusion.

Theologically, Hagenberg's chosen text reflects Augustine's vision of eternal rest, joy, and the unending praise of God—a glimpse of the believer's ultimate hope. Its themes echo scriptural portraits of the New Creation and the everlasting "Amen" of God's people (Revelation 21; 2 Corinthians 1:20). Through its rhythmic exultation and luminous harmonies, *Alleluia* invites singers and listeners alike to anticipate the enduring life and joy found in God's presence.

- THE LIBERTY UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS -

Sopranos

Sarah Bromke '25 & '27 – M.M. Vocal Performance (Cherry Hill, NJ)

Eve Hodges '28 – B.F.A. Musical Theatre (Indianapolis, IN)

Ruth Smirnov '28 – B.M. Vocal Performance (Sacramento, CA)

Lydia Sutton '27 – B.M. Music Education (Washington, DC)

Altos

Isabella Chambers '27 – B.M. Music Education (Charleston, SC)

Maria Douglas '26 – B.M. Vocal Performance (Richmond, VA)

Jordyn Stott '27 – B.M. Vocal Performance (Wake Forest, NC)

Erica Windsor '27 – B.M. Music Education (Bridgeton, NJ)

Tenors

Ben Butler '26 — B.S. Music & Worship (Columbus, OH)

Owen Crawford '27 — B.S. Music: Voice (Chambersburg, PA)

David Dorris '26 – B.S. Psychology (Nashville, TN)

Basses

William Dykes '27 – M.M. Vocal Performance (Augusta, GA)

Jeremy Kang '26 – B.S. Law & Policy: Pre-Law (Wheaton, IL)

Noah De Yarman '29 – B.M. Music Education & B.M. Vocal Performance (Sheboygan, WI)

Josiah Worsley '28 – B.M. Music Education & B.M. Vocal Performance (Granite Falls, NC)

- DIRECTOR & FEATURED ARTISTS -



Dr. Thomas E. Lerew

Dr. Thomas E. Lerew accepted an appointment as Associate Professor of Choral Music & Conducting in the School of Music at Liberty University in the fall of 2024. At Liberty, he teaches courses in conducting, choral music, and music education and conducts the acclaimed Liberty University Chamber Singers.

Prior to moving to Lynchburg, Dr. Lerew served eight years as Associate Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Trevecca University in Nashville, Tennessee. Dr. Lerew is a strong proponent of choral music in the church and has conducted choirs serving the congregations of Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Arizona and Tennessee. In Nashville, he founded Voces Fidei (Voices of Faith), a semi-professional chamber choir dedicated to the proclamation of the gospel through the artistic performance of sacred choral literature. Other past conducting experiences include as assistant conductor of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra Chorus, artistic director of the regionally acclaimed Arizona Repertory Singers, and conductor of the University of Arizona Symphonic Choir, the premiere undergraduate choral ensemble at UA. Dr. Lerew has also taught vocal music and music theory in public high schools in both Pennsylvania and New York where his students placed in numerous regional and all-state honor choirs.

In giving back to the profession, Dr. Lerew has served the American Choral Directors Association on the boards of its New York, Arizona, and Tennessee state chapters as well as its greater Southern Region. He is presently the website & digital communications manager for Southern Region, Tennessee, and Arkansas ACDA chapters. In Arizona, Dr. Lerew was the editor of Antiphon, a quarterly publication by AzACDA and is a contributor to the review columns of ACDA's Choral Journal. In addition to ACDA, he maintains active memberships in the Gordon Institute for Music Learning, National Association for Music Education, and Virginia Music Educators Association.

Dr. Lerew has conducted choirs throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe and is in frequent demand as a clinician, presenter, and guest conductor. He holds degrees from The University of Arizona, Syracuse University, and Houghton University and has studied conducting with Brandon Johnson, John Warren, Elizabeth Schauer, and Bruce Chamberlain. His primary research areas include repertoire selection practices, music learning theory in the rehearsal setting, and the use of technology in academic productivity.

He is a proud native of the family apple orchards of south-central Pennsylvania. Dr. Lerew and his wife, Kerry, take their greatest joy in their three young children.



Karissa Juhas

Karissa Juhas is an accompanist and educator who specializes in both classical and Christian contemporary music. She holds a B.M in Commercial Music with a focus in Songwriting from Liberty University and is currently completing her Master of Arts degree in Music Education with a focus in Performance. She has had the honor of accompanying Liberty University's Chamber Singers; Concert Choir; University Chorale; and a cappella group, Shine (for occasional accompanied selections). She also has accompanied both instrumental and vocal students of various levels, both at the university and in the community.



Miriam Thompson

Miriam Thompson, a native of Pamplin, Virginia, is pursuing a Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance at Liberty University, where she studies under Yevgeniy Dovgalyuk. She performs regularly with the Liberty University Symphony Orchestra and the Honors String Quartet. Outside the university, Miriam serves as a section violinist with the Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra and enjoys performing at weddings and private events throughout the Lynchburg area.

Liberty University School of Music Upcoming Events

Piano Showcase	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Thu, March 26, 7:30 PM</i>
Woodwind Chamber Ensembles	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Macel Falwell Recital Hall (M305) Mon, March 30, 7:30 PM</i>
*Jazz Ensemble	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Concert Hall Tue, March 31, 7:30 PM</i>
Brass Chamber Ensembles	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Oldham Recital Hall (M170) Thu, April 2, 7:30 PM</i>
Jazz Combos	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Instrumental Rehearsal Room (M160) Thu, April 7, 7:30 PM</i>
Clarinet Ensemble	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Oldham Recital Hall (M170) Thu, April 9, 7:30 PM</i>
Night of Worship	<i>Thomas Road Baptist Church 1971 University Blvd. Sun, April 12, 7:00 PM</i>
Jazz Guitar Ensemble	<i>Center for Music and the Worship Arts, Macel Falwell Recital Hall (M305) Tue, April 14, 7:30 PM</i>

**Ticketed Event. Tickets can be purchased at www.liberty.edu/tickets.*

**We would like to thank the
Liberty University Administration for
their faithful support of the School of Music.**

Dr. Dondi Costin, President
Dr. Scott Hicks, Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Dr. Stephen Müller, Dean, School of Music
The School of Music Administration, Faculty, and Staff

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