



## Program Notes & Translations

*The Sally Gardens* is a traditional Irish folk song, with text by the poet W.B. Yeats, which has been distinctly set in contemporary style by the celebrated English composer, Benjamin Britten. (In December we featured the music of Britten to commemorate the centennial of his birth. We liked his music so much we decided to feature two more Britten arrangements tonight!) Benjamin Britten had a great love of folk songs and he regularly used their melodic themes in both his instrumental and vocal writing.

Originally published in 1926, *Bye Bye Blackbird* was written by the American composer Ray Henderson and lyricist Mort Dixon. It is considered a popular standard and was first recorded by Gene Austin in 1926. Throughout its history, it has received many types of arrangements and performances, from John Coltrane to Paul McCartney and Ella Fitzgerald to Frank Sinatra. Most recordings of the song often include only the chorus; the verses are far less known.

In his notes for *One Mile*, Rollo Dilworth writes, "it is a song about patience, perseverance, and the pursuit of freedom." The song begins with a newly composed melody and lyric, "One mile, on the road to freedom, one mile on the road to glory," before changing over into the traditional African-American spiritual *By and By*. By blending the old with the new, Mr. Dilworth is able to demonstrate his talents as a modern composer, and show his sincere appreciation for the history of the African-American spiritual.

*Here's to Song* was originally published in 1979 as part of a collection titled *Song for the Mira*, by Allister MacGillivray. It was later arranged for choirs by Lydia Adams and has been a popular choice for festivals and concerts as a parting song. The text naturally lends itself to a choral adaptation, with lyrics "Here's to song, here's to time, here's to both with friends of mine. Here's to friends who raise their voices high." It is the message of friendship and how music brings us together to share in that fellowship that is the central theme to this song. Considering this wonderful sentiment, and the beautiful musical setting, it is no surprise that it has become such a popular song for choirs of all ages.

Written by Sy Oliver, with lyrics by Sid Garris, *Opus One* was originally written in 1943 for a film titled *Broadway Rhythm*. While it did not make the final cut in the film, Tommy Dorsey, who had hired Sy Oliver to become an arranger for his band in 1939 after their prior album did not receive critical acclaim, released a recording of the song in 1944 as an instrumental track. Since that time *Opus One* has been a hit and a staple in the jazz and big band repertoire, with recordings by The Mills Brothers, Gene Krupa, and was even used in Martin Scorsese's film *New York, New York* (1977).



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With *Ave Maria* by Otto Fischer we continue our survey of various *Ave Maria* settings. In recent memory we have performed settings by Schubert, Biebl, Kodaly and Andriessen. This version includes the text "Ave Maria" simply as a refrain. The verse is in Hungarian: "I wish I were a little bell, I'd sing a beautiful melody, and the Earth and sky would sing with me. This little bell is within my soul, the melody is the sound of my heart."

The Mira River, a Canadian river located in southeastern Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, was the inspiration for local singer-songwriter Allister MacGillivray's *Song for the Mira*. The song describes a magical place of great beauty and wonderful people. Over the years, it has become a renowned folk song that has been recorded by many artists and translated into several different languages.

Undoubtedly the most long lived and popular blues song ever written is William Christopher Handy's classic *St. Louis Blues*, which was first published 100 years ago in 1914. According to Handy, he found his inspiration for the song while wandering the streets of St. Louis. One afternoon he met a woman tormented by her husband's absence. She told Handy: "My man's got a heart like a rock cast in the sea." Handy, forty years old at the time, drew his inspiration for many of his songs from African-American words and music, so it is not surprising that he began to compose a theme to this woman's anguish. He later said his aim was "to combine ragtime syncopation with a real melody in the spiritual tradition."

*Where'er You Walk* is an aria from *Semele*, an opera written in the 1700's by G. F. Handel. It is based on the classical myth of Semele, mother of Dionysus, for whom the god Jupiter creates a rural paradise for the amusement of Semele, and he invites her to revel in its delights. This beautiful melody is one of the most famous pieces of legato (smooth and connected) singing.

*The Minstrel Boy* is an Irish patriotic song written by Thomas Moore (1779–1852) who set it to the melody of *The Moreen*, an old Irish air. It is widely believed that Moore composed the song in remembrance of a number of his friends whom he met while studying at Trinity College, Dublin and who had participated in (and were killed during) the Irish Rebellion of 1798. On a simple narrative level, *The Minstrel Boy* is the story of a young man who goes off to fight for Irish freedom. His mission is to defend his country with his sword and sing its praises with his harp. When he falls in battle, he tears the strings from his harp, preferring to destroy it than let it fall into the hands of the enemy – a fate he regards as tantamount to being subjected to slavery.



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America's unofficial national anthem was composed by an immigrant who left his home in Siberia for America when he was only five years old. The original version of *God Bless America* was written by Irving Berlin (1888-1989) during the summer of 1918 at Camp Upton, located in Yaphank, Long Island, for his Ziegfeld-style revue, Yip, Yip, Yaphank. "Make her victorious on land and foam, God Bless America..." ran the original lyric. However, Berlin decided that the solemn tone of *God Bless America* was somewhat out of keeping with the more comedic elements of the show and the song was laid aside.

In the fall of 1938, as war was again threatening Europe, Berlin decided to write a "peace" song. He recalled his *God Bless America* from twenty years earlier and made some alterations to reflect the different state of the world. Singer Kate Smith introduced the revised *God Bless America* during her radio broadcast on Armistice Day, 1938. The song was an immediate sensation; the sheet music was in great demand. Berlin soon established the God Bless America Fund, dedicating the royalties to the Boy and Girl Scouts of America.

At the Silent Auction held at our Broadway concert in February, we offered the opportunity to conduct the choir. This year's winner was Mr. Daniel Partlow who chose one of the greatest songs in the Great American Songbook!

In 1946, after driving west from Pennsylvania to California, Bobby Troup wrote the popular *Route 66*, chronicling his journey on the highway that, as the song says, "winds from Chicago to L.A." Since then, a wide range of artists, including Nat King Cole, the Rolling Stones, and recently, John Mayer, have recorded the song. The mass appeal of *Route 66* may be in part because the song has tapped into the love Americans have for their cars and the freedom those cars afford to travel across this great country.

*Blue Skies* was written by Irving Berlin in 1926 as a last minute addition to the Rodgers and Hart musical, *Betsy*. The song was an instant success, with audiences on opening night demanding 24 encores of the piece from star Belle Baker. In 1927 it became one of the first songs to be featured in a *talkie* when Al Jolson performed it in *The Jazz Singer*. We hope our finale sends you home happy and smiling!



Fairfield County Children's Choir  
P.O. Box 110588 Trumbull, CT 06611 • 203 414-4292 • www.SingFCCC.org

Jon Noyes, Music Director & Founder presents  
**Fairfield County Children's Choir**  
**Spring Concert**

*Singing*  
**America**  
A Celebration of  
**The Great American Songbook**

**Saturday • May 10, 2014 • 7pm**

**Fairfield Warde High School**  
**Fairfield, CT**

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# Fairfield County Children's Choir

Jon Noyes, Music Director & Founder presents  
19th Annual Spring Concert



## A Celebration of The Great American Songbook

Saturday, May 10, 2014 at 7:00pm  
Fairfield Warde High School  
Fairfield, Connecticut

### Special Guests

Rodger Bryan – Bass  
Peter Hohmeister – Percussion  
Heather Hisey - Flute

### FCCC Music Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder, Chamber Singers Conductor  
Lisa Bettke – Chorale Conductor & Accompanist  
Kevin Cotellese – Concert Choir Conductor  
Ashley Zadravec – Chorus Conductor  
Donna Beatty – Accompanist

### FCCC Administrative Staff

Jon Noyes – Music Director & Founder  
Barbara Brauner – General Manager  
Alicen Gachi – Assistant Choir Manager

### Special Thanks to

Jennifer Marrelli, Photography

For audition and ticket information, please contact us at:



# Fairfield County Children's Choir

P.O. Box 110588 Trumbull, CT 06611 • 203 414-4292 • www.SingFCCC.org



# PROGRAM

## Fairfield County Youth Choir

I Got Rhythm .....George & Ira Gershwin, arr. Warnick  
Summertime .....George & Ira Gershwin, arr. Huff

### Chorus

When I Close My Eyes .....Jim Papoulis  
The Water Is Wide .....American Folk Song, arr. Zanninelli  
It's Only a Paper Moon .....Billy Rose, Yip Harburg & Harold Arlen

### Chorale

Rejoice and Sing! .....Rollo Dilworth  
The Sally Gardens .....Irish Tune, arr. B. Britten  
Bye Bye Blackbird .....Dixon/Henderson, arr. Althouse

### Concert Choir

One Mile .....Rollo Dilworth  
Here's to Song .....Allister MacGillivray, arr. Adams  
Opus One .....Sy Oliver, arr. Bacon

### Chamber Singers

Ave Maria .....Otto Fischer  
Song for the Mira (*for Emma*) .....Allister MacGillivray, arr. Calvert  
St. Louis Blues .....W.C. Handy, arr. Shaw

### Combined Choirs

Where'er You Walk .....G. F. Handel  
The Minstrel Boy .....Irish Melody, arr. Britten  
God Bless America .....Irving Berlin, arr. Eilers-Bacak  
*Guest Conductor - Daniel Partlow*  
Route 66 .....Bobby Troup, arr. Shaw  
Blue Skies .....Irving Berlin, arr. Emerson



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Our Spring Concert program has a number of themes running throughout, with a primary focus on the music of the “Great American Songbook.” The Great American Songbook is a term used to denote the canon of the most important and influential American popular songs of the 20th century – principally from Broadway and Hollywood musicals - that told the American story. It was completely original in some respects, but deeply rooted and strongly influenced by the musical form known as jazz and was influenced by its predecessors, ragtime and blues. This music of the 20th century is known and widely recognized around the world as a truly American invention and cultural legacy. Other themes you will hear in tonight's program include: Irish folk song arrangements by Benjamin Britten; the music of Rollo Dilworth, a major composer, arranger and conductor who will be the guest artist for our 2016 Spring Concert; the music of Canadian songwriter Allister MacGillivray; the classic music of George Gershwin and Irving Berlin; other selections of great folk and classical repertoire.

We open tonight's program with the timeless **I Got Rhythm** from the musical *Girl Crazy*, composed in 1930 by George Gershwin with lyrics by Ira Gershwin. George was the quintessential American composer, equally at home with the music of the European classical tradition as well as modernism, Tin Pan Alley, jazz and blues. In his own unique way, he created a singular musical language which transcended the gulf between popular music and the classical concert hall, in much the same way that Mozart and Verdi did in their eras. “Who could ask for anything more?”

One of the most beloved songs in American musical history is **Summertime**, a lullaby from Gershwin's opera *Porgy and Bess*. Based on the novel by DuBose Heyward, *Porgy and Bess* opened in 1935 on Broadway after previews in Boston. Gershwin stated that his goal was to combine "the drama and romance of *Carmen* and the beauty of *Meistersinger*." Alex Ross, in his 2007 best seller *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Music of the Twentieth Century*, describes the initial reaction to Porgy:

*"People had trouble deciding whether Gershwin had written an opera or a musical show: some theatergoers complained that the orchestral passages and turbulent recitatives got in the way of the hit numbers, while classical-music intellectuals found the showstoppers bewildering. There was fuss over how the work should be labeled – "opera," "folk opera," "musical," or something else."*



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New York City-based Jim Papoulis' compositions are known for exploring new modes of musical communication by honoring classical traditional forms but also experimenting with more modern sounds. **When I Close My Eyes** has three different sections. The beginning is very gentle, innocent and reflective with lyrics from a child's perspective. The middle section is a clear declaration of belief in oneself and is sung with authority and strength. The end of the piece returns to the original feel of gentleness and introspection. The last phrase “and I am not afraid” is sung in a subtle way, as if speaking to oneself. A cello is played throughout the song to communicate a new color which fits beautifully with the voices and the music. “In order for a child to feel strength and to believe in themselves, it must come from within... When I close my eyes then I can see, and I am not afraid.”

**The Water is Wide** is a song of incredible beauty and heartbreak. Its origin is in dispute – the first published version appears in 1724 as Waly, Waly -- but it is most likely English or Scottish. Cecil Sharp collected this song in the southern Appalachians during World War I. In our version which is adapted and arranged by Luigi Zaninelli, the imagery of the lyrics describes the challenges of love: "Love is handsome, love is kind" during the beginning of any relationship. However, as time progresses, "love grows old, and waxes cold." Even true love, the lyrics say, can "fade away like morning dew."

**It's Only a Paper Moon** is a popular song written originally for an unsuccessful Broadway play titled *The Great Magoo*, set in Coney Island. Its lasting fame stems from recordings by popular artists during the last years of World War II, when versions by Ella Fitzgerald and the Nat King Cole Trio became popular. It has endured as a vehicle for improvisation by many jazz musicians. First you will hear a soloist in the beginning, and then you will hear everyone sing through the entire piece. The piece is then repeated where you will hear two soloists improvise over the music until the bridge comes back at “without your love.”

**Rejoice and Sing!** is an original gospel-style song of celebration. This selection incorporates the African-American spiritual, *"I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing"*. Through the use of harmony, call and response and vocal ostinatos, this wonderful melody is constantly changing, presenting itself in a slightly different way. The text emphasizes the power of singing in our lives and its ability to inspire performers and listeners alike. Rollo Dilworth is a leader in the choral music community and has given a modern voice to the African-American spiritual. Since the early part of this century he has been a prolific composer and outstanding music educator, writing over 150 arrangements and compositions, while finding time to be a guest clinician and All-State conductor for countless numbers of festivals.