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CAPE FEAR CHORALE PRESENTS

# THE BIG PICTURE

Judith Weir - The Big Picture

Ralph Vaughan Williams - Five Mystical Songs

Roderick Williams - O Guiding Night

Tomás Luis de Victoria - Motets

*Featuring Special Guest, Thandolwethu Mamba, Baritone*

**AARON PEISNER**

*Artistic Director*

**BETTSY CURTIS**

*Pianist*

**SATURDAY, APRIL 6TH, 2024 | 7:30PM | KENAN AUDITORIUM**



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CAPE FEAR CHORALE PRESENTS

# THE 60S

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May 17TH, 2024

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CAPE FEAR CHORALE PRESENTS

# BACH

## CHRISTMAS ORATORIO

Cape Fear Chorale and orchestra perform J. S. Bach's beloved telling of the Christmas story (Parts 4 and 6) as well as carols and choral gems to usher in the holiday season.

Wednesday, November 20th  
7:30PM | Wilson Center

AARON PEISNER  
Conductor

Welcome!

Performance is a special time. Our mission statement states, "Cape Fear Chorale believes in the transformative power of music. We celebrate the expressive capacity of the human voice, and the ability choral music has to heal, unite, and inspire our community. We are committed to building our community through exceptional choral artistry and by creating meaningful, educational, and inclusive musical experiences." As an arts organization we are deeply committed to this mission however, without you the audience, our friends and supporters, we would fail at our mission. Your help through giving and your inspiration through your presence make everything possible. Sit back, relax, enjoy the fruits of our combined efforts and let the melodies harmonies and lyrics heal, unite and inspire. We are a community, and we are thrilled to be with you and share this wonderful art form.

John Clyatt, President  
Cape Fear Chorale Board of Directors

Dear friends and patrons,

Welcome to Cape Fear Chorale's 2024 spring concert, The Big Picture. I am continually humbled and honored by this ensemble's dedication and skill. Over the past few months, we have been working hard to prepare the music you'll hear on tonight's concert, which includes the Southern premiere of Judith Weir's delightful and eclectic composition, The Big Picture, the stunning Five Mystical Songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Roderick Williams's transcendent O Guiding Night, and two impassioned motets by the sixteenth-century Spanish composer, Tomás Luis de Victoria. We are especially excited to collaborate with guest instrumentalists and with baritone Thandolwethu Mamba. We have fallen in love with the repertoire on this concert, and we have grown as musicians and as human beings through our work toward tonight's performance. We hope you enjoy the fruits of this labor of love.

To those of you who attend Cape Fear Chorale's concerts season after season, year after year, we thank you for your continued support. To those of you for whom this is your first concert with us, I hope it won't be your last. To everyone, I hope you enjoy today's performance, and that the music on this concert, both mystical and earthly, will transport you, move you, and inspire you.

I invite you to our third annual Pops Fundraiser, which will be held on Friday, May 17 at 7:00pm at Winter Park Baptist Church. Our theme this year is the 1960s! I also invite you to our Fall 2024 concert, at which we will present two large sections of Johann Sebastian Bach's magnificent Christmas Oratorio, as well as a selection of carols and other holiday music. That concert is set for Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at 7:30 in the Wilson Center in downtown Wilmington.

Aaron Peisner, Artistic Director

The Big Picture  
April 6, 2024 | 7:30 p.m.  
Aaron Peisner, conductor  
Bettsy Curtis, piano

Welcome

John Clyatt, President, Board of Directors

O Guiding Night (2012)

Roderick Williams (b. 1965)

O quam gloriosum est regnum (1572)

Tomás Luis de Victoria (1548-1611)

O vos omnes (1572)

Presentation of the Jerry S. Cribbs Scholarship

The Big Picture (2016-2017)

Judith Weir (b. 1954)

1. Green
2. Blue
3. Gold
4. Red, White
5. Colour

Nathan Olawsky, clarinet · Mitchell Hebert, percussion

Five Mystical Songs (1906-1911)

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

1. Easter
2. I got me flowers
3. Love bade me welcome
4. The Call
5. Antiphon

Thandolwethu Mamba, baritone  
Lucas Gerbe, violin · Jessica Landes, violin · Clark Spencer, viola  
Andrew Anagnost, cello · Karl Marzolf, bass

## Texts and Translations

### O Guiding Night

Music by Roderick Williams

Text by St. John of the Cross (1542-1591), translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez

One dark night,  
fired with love's urgent longings,  
(O the sheer grace!)  
I went out unseen,  
my house being now all stilled.

On that glad night,  
In secret, for no one saw me,  
nor did I look at anything  
with no other light or guide  
than the one that burned in my heart.

This guided me  
more surely than the light of noon  
to where he was awaiting me –  
him I knew so well –  
there in a place where no one appeared.

O guiding night!  
O night more lovely than the dawn!  
O night that has united  
the Lover with his beloved,  
transforming the beloved in her Lover.

Upon my flower breast  
which I kept wholly for him alone, (in secret)  
There he lay sleeping,  
and I caressing him  
there in a breeze from the fanning cedars.

I abandoned and forgot myself,  
laying my face on my Beloved;  
all things ceased; I went out from myself,  
leaving my cares  
forgotten among the lilies.

### O quam gloriosum est regnum

Music by Tomás Luis de Victoria

All Saints vespers antiphon

O quam gloriosum est regnum,  
In quo cum Christo gaudent omnes Sancti!  
Amicti stolis albis,  
Sequuntur Agnum, quocumque ierit.

O how glorious is the kingdom  
In which all the saints rejoice with Christ,  
Clad in robes of white  
They follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

### O vos omnes

Music by Tomás Luis de Victoria

Lamentations 1:12

O vos omnes qui transitis per viam,  
Attendite et videte:  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus

Attendite, universi populi,  
Et videte dolorem meum.  
Si est dolor similis sicut dolor meus.

O all ye that pass by the way  
Attend and see:  
If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.

Attend, all ye people,  
And see my sorrow:  
If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow.



## The Big Picture

Music by Judith Weir

### 1. Green

(*Green Groweth the Holly* – attrib. King Henry VIII)

Green groweth the holly,  
So doth the ivy.  
Though winter blasts blow never so high,  
Green groweth the holly.

As the holly groweth green  
And never changeth hue,  
So I am, ever hath been,  
Unto my lady true.

As the holly groweth green  
With ivy all alone

When flowers cannot be seen  
And greenwood leaves be gone,

Now unto my lady  
Promise to her I make  
From all other only  
To her I me betake.

Adieu, mine own lady,  
Adieu, my special  
Who hath my heart truly  
Be sure, and ever shall.

### 2. Blue

(*The Man with the Blue Guitar* – Wallace Stevens, verses 1-2)

I  
The man bent over his guitar,  
[A shearsman of sorts.] The day was green.

They said, "You have a blue guitar,  
You do not play things as they are."

The man replied, "Things as they are  
Are changed upon the blue guitar."

And they said then, "But play, you must,  
A tune beyond us, yet ourselves,

A tune upon the blue guitar  
Of things exactly as they are."

II  
I cannot bring a world quite round,  
Although I patch it as I can.

I sing a hero's head, large eye  
And bearded bronze, but not a man,

Although I patch him as I can  
And reach through him almost to man.

If to serenade almost to man  
Is to miss, by that, things as they are,

Say it is the serenade  
Of a man that plays a blue guitar.

### 3. Gold

(*Nothing Gold Can Stay* – Robert Frost)

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

#### 4. Red, White

(A *White Rose* – John Boyle O'Reilly)

The red rose whispers of passion.  
And the white rose breathes of love;  
Oh, the red rose is a falcon,  
And the white rose is a dove.

But I send you a cream-white rosebud,  
With a flush on its petal tips;  
For the love that is purest and sweetest  
Has a kiss of desire on the lips.

#### 5. Colour

(*Colour* – Christina Rossetti)

What is pink? a rose is pink  
By a fountain's brink.  
What is red? a poppy's red  
In its barley bed.  
What is blue? the sky is blue  
Where the clouds float thro'.  
What is white? a swan is white  
Sailing in the light.  
What is yellow? pears are yellow,  
Rich and ripe and mellow.  
What is green? the grass is green,  
With small flowers (in) between.  
What is violet? clouds are violet  
In the summer twilight.  
What is orange? Why, an orange,  
Just an orange!

#### Five Mystical Songs

Music by Ralph Vaughan Williams

Text by George Herbert

##### 1. Easter

Rise heart; thy Lord is risen.  
Sing his praise without delays,  
Who takes thee by the hand,  
that thou likewise with him may'st rise;  
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,  
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part with all thy  
art.

The crosse taught all wood to resound his name, who  
bore the same.

His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key  
Is the best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song pleasant  
and long;

Or since all musick is but three parts vied and  
multiplied.

O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,

And make up our defects with his sweet art.

##### 2. I got me flowers

I got me flowers to strew thy way;  
I got me boughs off many a tree:  
But thou wast up by break of day,  
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sunne arising in the East.  
Though he give light, and th'East perfume;  
If they should offer to contest  
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,  
Though many sunnes to shine endeavour?  
We count three hundred, but we misse:  
There is but one, and that one ever.

### 3. Love bade me welcome

Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back.  
Guiltie of dust and sinne.  
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lack'd anything.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here:  
Love said, You shall be he.  
I the unkinde, ungrateful? Ah, my deare,  
I cannot look on thee.  
Love took my hand, and smiling did reply,  
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve.  
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?  
My deare, then I will serve.  
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat:  
So I did sit and eat.

### 4. The Call

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:  
Such a Way, as gives us breath:  
Such a Truth, as ends all strife:  
Such a Life, as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:  
Such a Light, as shows a feast:  
Such a Feast, as mends in length:  
Such a Strength, as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:  
Such a Joy, as none can move:  
Such a Love, as none can part:  
Such a Heart, as joyes in love.

### 5. Antiphon

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing:  
My God and King.  
The heavens are not too high,  
His praise may thither flie;  
The earth is not too low,  
His praises there may grow.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing:  
My God and King.  
The Church with psalms must shout,  
No doore can keep them out;  
But above all, the heart  
Must bear the longest part.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing:  
My God and King.

## Program Notes

This evening's concert centers on two interrelated themes: mysticism and art. "Mysticism" can be defined in many different ways, including the idea of becoming one with God or an absolute deity, entering into an altered, ecstatic state that brings one closer to God, or having human experiences of the divine. The compositions by Roderick Williams, Tomás Luis de Victoria, and Ralph Vaughan Williams all explore this idea of becoming one with the divine or manifesting the divine through human experience. This concert places these mystical texts in dialogue with the eclectic texts from Judith Weir's "The Big Picture," which discuss love, the nature of art, the passage of time, and delighting in the colors of the world. Framed by mystical poetry and elevated by the touch of a masterful composer like Judith Weir, these subjects fill in the big picture of what it means to be a human, walking through this world and trying to make sense of it all.

**O Guiding Night** by Roderick Williams (b. 1965) sets the text of John of the Cross (Juan de la Cruz, born Juan de Yezpe y Alvarez, 1542-1591), a Spanish priest, poet, and mystic. John's poem "The Dark Night of the Soul" (La noche oscura del alma) describes the journey of the soul to the mystical union with God. Roderick Williams alternates between breathless, fragmented lines in which the vocal entrances overlap one another, and homophonic passages in which the entire choir declaims the text together. Another musical device utilized throughout the piece is that of contrary motion, in which vocal lines move in opposite directions, here symbolizing the union of the earthly with the divine. Contrary motion is on display most directly in the passage "This guided me more surely than the light of noon," in which the basses ascend the scale while the sopranos descend. **O Guiding Night** was commissioned by the choir The



Sixteen and artistic director, Harry Christophers. In addition to being an acclaimed composer, Roderick Williams is one of the UK's most sought-after baritones.

**Tomás Luis de Victoria** (1548-1611) was the most famous Spanish composer of the Renaissance, and is often considered one of the most important late Renaissance composers along with Palestrina, Lassus, and Byrd. He was a contemporary of John of the Cross as well as another Spanish mystic, Teresa of Ávila. **O quam gloriosum est regnum** and **O vos omnes** are two of his most famous compositions. These works are called *motets*, the sacred counterpart to the secular *madrigal*. In the typical Renaissance motet, each line of text or couple of words has a melodic theme or motive, which is imitated by all the different voice parts at different times, creating an intricate texture.

**O quam gloriosum** is a joyful work for All Saints Day that features many examples of text painting, in which the musical composition reflects the literal meaning of the text. At the word "gaudent" (rejoice), the lower three parts sing rising figures on fast notes, reflecting the joyful text. At the phrase "sequuntur agnum" (they follow the lamb), the voices enter in quick succession, literally following each other. **O vos omnes** demonstrates Victoria's impassioned, minor-key writing, which is full of suspensions and dissonances reflecting the pain of this Good Friday text. These two musical settings of drastically different sacred texts both display an intensity of feeling that situate distinguish Victoria as one of the great Renaissance masters.

### **The Big Picture, by Judith Weir – Composer's note**

*The Big Picture* was written to celebrate the completion of a major redevelopment and refurbishment to the Aberdeen Art Gallery. Wishing to examine a subject important, in different ways, to both the visual arts and music, I decided to write about Color.

Pursuing the relationship between music and color to its logical conclusion, composers have often discussed whether musical tones and keys can be related to particular colors; the extreme form of this phenomenon is 'synesthesia' where listeners experience musical sound visually, in color. Although I have never sensed music in this way, I realized after long reflection that I had certain clear ideas about certain keys 'belonging' to certain colors; and I have explored these personal perceptions in *The Big Picture*, a cantata for two choral groups and small instrumental ensemble, in five color-themed movements, as follows:

**Green** is in E major. I hear this as a very bright key, with its multiple sharps, and see green as a bright, energetic color. Probably the 'green' of this music is brighter than the holly described in its text "Green Groweth The Holly", written (reputedly) by King Henry VIII.

**Blue.** The D minor of this piece reminds me of a melancholy, dark blue. Wallace Stevens' poem *The Man with the Blue Guitar* (of which this movement is a setting of the first two stanzas only) is said to be inspired by Picasso's *The Old Guitarist*. Looking at some of the blues in that picture, the deep somber ones, these are exactly the right hue for this music (!)

**Gold** is an atmosphere and an actual object as much as a color, and for this setting of *Nothing Gold Can Stay* by Robert Frost, I invented a chord which I felt had a particularly strong, metallic brightness, a combination of G and D majors, which remains in the air as a haze into which the poem disappears and reappears.

**Red, White** is a setting of a love poem by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish poet and activist, John Boyle O'Reilly. The basic tune to which the poem is sung hints at another red-referencing love song, by Robert Burns. In my mind the richer the red (shading towards purple) the more flats in the key signature, and this movement is in the very flat key of D flat major. White, meanwhile, is suggested by the absence of musical tone; the 'white' sections of this movement are whispered or hissed.

**Colour.** Christina Rossetti's poem moves swiftly through a band of different colors approximating somewhat to those in the visible spectrum. The recital of colors gave me the chance to revisit key-colors from the previous movements, but in the order Rossetti lists them, resulting in some sudden and strange modulations. The final half-minute or so allows all the colors to be 'heard' at once in a giant, extended chord.

J.W.

**Ralph Vaughan Williams** (1872-1958) was one of the most important British composers of the first half of the twentieth century. His most famous compositions include *The Lark Ascending* and *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, both of which feature elements of folk melody and inspiration from the Tudor era composers like Tallis and Byrd, hallmarks of Vaughan Williams's composition language. The **Five Mystical Songs** were written from 1906 to 1911, and received their premiere in 1911 at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, UK. Originally written for baritone, choir, and full orchestra, the version you will hear tonight is the composer's own arrangement for string quintet and piano. The texts from the Five Mystical Songs are by the 17<sup>th</sup> century poet and priest George Herbert.

The first song, **Easter**, features a continuous call and response between the soloist and chorus, supported by lush harmonies in the instrumental ensemble. **I got me flowers** is much more subdued, with a spare texture, and an unaccompanied choral phrase at the end of the movement. The third song, **Love bade me welcome**, is a text that has been set by several other composers, including Judith Weir, Roderick Williams, John Tavener, and David Hurd. In Vaughan Williams's setting, the agitated instrumental parts reflect the anxiety of the speaker, "yet my soul drew back, / guilty of dust and sin." Eventually, he accepts God's love, reflected in the serene and poignant music at the end of the song. **The Call** highlights the solo baritone with no choir, featuring melodic writing that betrays Vaughan Williams's love of English folk music. The final song, **Antiphon**, is for choir without the baritone soloist, and is frequently performed as a stand-alone piece by church choirs. Buzzing with rhythmic energy, Antiphon ends the concert with the proclamation, "Let all the world in every corner sing: my God and King!"

## About Cape Fear Chorale

Celebrating its twenty-sixth year, Cape Fear Chorale is under the direction of Aaron Peisner, Artistic Director and Conductor. All members are volunteers, and the group is comprised of 70-90 auditioned singers each semester.

Cape Fear Chorale presents two concerts annually, one in the fall and one in the spring. The repertoire has included major works, sacred music, secular music, patriotic music, humorous music, spirituals, holiday music, motets, madrigals and light opera. The Chorale has enjoyed hosting two guest conductors: internationally known choral composer Carl J. Nygard, Jr., and Welborn E. Young, Director of Choral Activities at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Artistic Director and Conductor of Bel Canto Company, a professional community chorus. During its fifteenth anniversary season, the Chorale premiered a commissioned work, Nygard's *Festival of Praise*.

Cape Fear Chorale is committed to building and enriching our community through exceptional choral artistry and by creating meaningful, educational, and inclusive musical experiences.

Cape Fear Chorale  
\*Charter Member  
+Former Board Member

<b>Soprano</b>	<b>Alto</b>	<b>Tenor</b>	<b>Bass</b>
Melody Bryan +	Laure Adams	Ken Ahlstrom	Lee André
Susan Carron +	Cate Arnold	Cody Aulidge	James Butts
Cheryl Cribbs *	Jane Both	John Clyatt	Curtis Campbell
Rachelle Dries +	Gayle Brandon	Rob Fisher	John Frye, Jr.
Susan Gardner *	Elaine Clyatt	David Hollowell	Nathan Gay
Victoria Hagendorf	Yeavonne Cox	David Hoover	Ed Hoefler
Terri Hollowell	Linda Gallo	Gwyn Kash	Jeffrey Ingold
Anjie King	Tanya Hanano	Taylor Morton	Bruce Johnson
Victoria Kunze	Katie Hudak	Javier Mory	Greg Leemhuis
Tami Link	Amy Luck +	Ian Olsen	Sam Melton
Marion Little *	Diane Lusk	Megan Pedigo	Hank Montgomery
Gina Martuscelli+	Rita Morgan *	Sam Robinson	G. Vance Moser
Anne Matney	Kahla Nelson	Charles Sanders *+	Todd Vernon
Jeanne Owens	Tanina Richardson	Arthur Stephan	David Whitehill
Suzanne Peters	Jenn Tabor	Alexander Vedder	
Beverly Rodegast	Tabitha Vedder	Rob Williams +	
Myrtle Sanders *	Rhonda Vega		
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**Appointed Positions**

Kevin Ulisnik, Stage Manager  
Anne Matney, Suzanne Peters and Elaine Clyatt, Librarians  
Susan Gardner, Social Coordinator and Program Typist





Artistic Director **Dr. Aaron Peisner** is delighted to direct the Cape Fear Chorale in his second season with the ensemble. He serves as Assistant Professor and Director of Choral Activities at University of North Carolina Wilmington, where he conducts the University Chorale and Chamber Singers, and teaches courses in choral music education, aural skills, conducting, and voice. Peisner also serves as chorus master for Opera Wilmington and is a founding member of the newly formed chamber choir, Wilmington Voices. Prior to his time at UNCW, Peisner was Interim Director of Choirs at Goucher College in Towson, Maryland. Dr. Peisner has prepared choirs for performances with the Baltimore and National Symphony Orchestras under the direction of conductors including Marin Alsop, Gianandrea Noseda, Donald Runnicles, and Jeannette Sorrell, including a Medici TV broadcast performance of John Adams' *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* with the NSO and Maestro Noseda at the Kennedy Center.

Peisner holds a Doctor of Musical Arts in choral conducting from the University of Maryland, where he studied conducting with Edward Maclary and James Ross and was awarded the Daniel L. Pomeroy Prize for outstanding work in 17th- and 18th-century music. Peisner earned his masters degree in choral conducting from Yale University, where he studied conducting with Marguerite Brooks, Jeffrey Douma, David Hill, and Masaaki Suzuki. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in music from Wesleyan University. Dr. Peisner's research areas include the performance and recording history of Spanish Renaissance music, the music of the Republic of Georgia, Kurt Weill's *Das Berliner Requiem* for men's chorus and wind band, and critical pedagogy and the music leadership practices of collegiate a cappella groups. A bass-baritone, he has sung professionally with the Taylor Festival Choir in Charleston, SC, the choir of the Basilica of the National Shrine in Washington, DC, the San Francisco Choral Artists, Polyhymnia (NYC), and Yale Schola Cantorum. He is a member of the American Choral Directors Association, serving as co-chair of the newly established NC Collegiate Festival Chorus. Dr. Peisner maintains an active schedule as a guest conductor and clinician.



Pianist **Dr. Betsy Curtis** holds three degrees in piano performance, a Bachelor of Music from Southern Methodist University, a Master of Music from the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, and a Doctor of Musical Arts from The University of Texas at Austin. She has held faculty positions at Baylor University, Howard Payne University, and the University of Texas at San Antonio. College teaching positions shifted to public-school music teaching while her children were young. From 2010 to 2022 Dr. Curtis held both a full-time position directing music at Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church and a part-time position at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington as a collaborative pianist. Starting in the Fall of 2022 her duties include teaching a music fundamentals class for Musical Theatre minors, and accompanying voice students, the university choirs, the Wilmington Opera Outreach Program, and Cape Fear Chorale.



Praised for his "chilling refinement in bearing and voice" (Opera Wire), **Thandolwethu Mamba** has been described as having a "magnificent voice" and "possessing an extraordinary capacity for timbral flexibility, which he exploits with a level of artistic maturity and musical tact that belies his age" (Classical Voice of North Carolina). A singing actor of outstanding vocal and stagecraft ability, Mr. Mamba is an upcoming baritone who continues to establish himself on opera and concert stages, showcasing his command of diverse styles and repertoire. Fresh from his Metropolitan Opera debut in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* in November 2023, recent roles have included the title roles in *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Gianni Schicchi*, Baron Duophol in *La Traviata*, Dancaïro in *Carmen*, Don Calogero Sedàra in *The Leopard* (a world premiere), Town Magistrate in *Signor*

Deluso, and Max in Stone Soup with Opera Wilmington, Frost Opera Theater, Si parla, si canta, Opera Theatre of Saint Louis and Florida Grand Opera. The rest of his 2022-23 season featured a series of solo recitals in North Carolina and Pennsylvania. Performances in Tosca, *Così fan tutte* (Don Alfonso cover), Treemonisha (Zodzetrick/Luddud cover), and Susannah amongst other engagements as a Gerdine Young Artist with Opera Theatre of Saint Louis were unfortunately stifled by delays in federal work authorization documents. As an artist who always seeks to create experiences that will reach a diverse audience, his concert program with pianist David Heid, *Paths & Journeys*, debuted in North Carolina in the Fall of 2022 and was described as “a vibrant and enriching collaboration” (CVNC). He regularly features music from diverse cultures and languages, including music from Sub-Saharan Africa and his home country, Eswatini. At the conclusion of his undergraduate career at Duke University, he was awarded the prestigious Louis Sudler Prize as well as the Benenson Award for the Arts. Named the First Place and Grand Prize recipient of the 2022 Heafner/Williams Vocal Competition, Mr. Mamba is also a proud winner of the Raleigh Symphony Orchestra Rising Stars Competition, which led to his orchestral debut in Mahler’s *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*. Mamba was recently named as a finalist in the Mildred Miller International Voice Competition, Benjamin Mathews Vocal Competition, and the Sullivan Foundation Awards. Mamba is a recent double graduate (Artist Diploma and Master of Music) of the Frost School of Music in Miami where he studied with Metropolitan Opera baritone Kim Josephson. Thando, as he is more commonly known, is originally from Eswatini in Southern Africa and is committed to developing the growth of opera as a celebrated and sustainable art form in his home country and the continent of Africa at large.



**Jerry S. Cribbs**, founder, Artistic Director and Conductor Emeritus of Cape Fear Chorale served Sampson County Schools from 1974 until 1979 and New Hanover County Schools from 1980 until his retirement in 2004. He taught choral music at E.A. Laney High School, John T. Hoggard High School and Winter Park Elementary School. He also served as Director of Arts Education and Public Relations, and as Director of Human Resources. Mr. Cribbs also served as an adjunct instructor for the Music Department at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and in the Fine Arts and Humanities Department at Cape Fear Community College.

As an active guest conductor, clinician and adjudicator throughout the Eastern United States, Mr. Cribbs has conducted well over 100 district choruses, festivals and school and church clinics. He has Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in Music Education degrees, as well as a Certificate of Supervision from East Carolina University, inclusively. He has public school teaching experience in choral, instrumental and general music at all levels, K – 12. Mr. Cribbs has taught at the college level in the areas of choral music, choral methods, music fundamentals and music appreciation.

Mr. Cribbs is in his 21<sup>st</sup> year as Director of Music Ministries at Grace United Methodist Church in Wilmington, NC, where he conducts the Chancel Choir and the Grace Ringers handbell choir.

Mr. Cribbs is a member of the North Carolina Chapter of American Choral Directors Association (NC-ACDA) and has served on the board. He currently maintains membership in the Wilmington Chapter of the American Guild of Organists (AGO). Mr. Cribbs is a member of and has held offices in the North Carolina Music Educators Association (NCMEA). In 2008, he received the Lara Hoggard Award for Distinguished Service in Choral Music in North Carolina, presented the NC-ACDA, and in 2009 was awarded the East Carolina University School of Music Distinguished Alumni Award.

## Jerry S. Cribbs Scholarship Recipient

**Miia Backstrom** is a senior attending John T. Hoggard High School. She was born in Coleraine, Northern Ireland, and now lives in Wilmington, North Carolina. Miia has been taking private voice lessons with Sarah Kittle for five years, and has been studying piano with Ms. Kittle for two years. She has been in chorus all throughout middle and high school, and has performed three voice recitals. Miia performed in Opera Wilmington's 2022 production of *The Magic Flute* as the Third Spirit, and has been teaching a few young singers voice lessons. She enjoys spending her free time working out, reading, and playing Pickleball, and hopes to have many opportunities to travel and visit different countries in the future. In the fall of 2024, Miia will be studying vocal performance in college, and hopes to teach private voice lessons as a career.

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Donations Received October 31, 2023 through March 10, 2024

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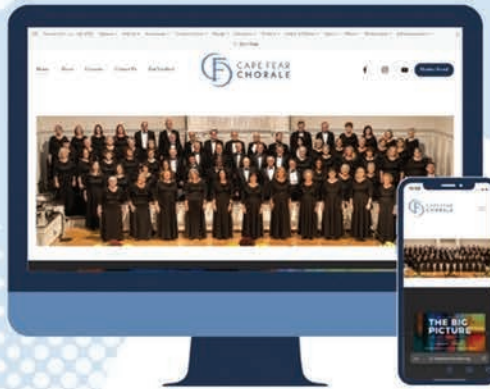




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