



## Make Our Garden Grow

### Contra Costa Chorale Spring 2024 Concert

Over the years the Contra Costa Chorale has performed concerts highlighting choral music specific to minority representations. “Amazing Grace” followed the development of Black music from its origins in Africa, to the music of enslaved people, which ultimately led to jazz, blues, and gospel music. “Out of the Shadows” was a concert consisting totally of women composers from the medieval and Renaissance periods to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Even though progress has been made in including underrepresented groups of composers, we must take the responsibility through our performances to do whatever is possible to provide equal footing in programming with the white male composers who have dominated the world of Western Music.

Our Spring concert, “Make Our Garden Grow,” will bring together music written by Blacks, women, Indigenous peoples, and the LGBTQ+ community to make our audiences aware of, not only the inequities in programming, but also the amazingly beautiful music that too often is not given the status it deserves, overtaken by the dominance of the traditional white male perspective in Western Music.

The highlight of the concert will be a commissioned piece by Joan Szymko, widely regarded as an outstanding composer of choral music in America today. Her piece, “Seed,” is based on a poem titled “Declaration” by Elsa Gidlow, best known for writing *On a Grey Thread*, the first volume of openly lesbian love poetry published in North America. We are honored that Ms. Szymko has taken on this commission in celebration of Cindy Beitmen’s 12th anniversary directing the Chorale, and we will be very excited to present it for the first time at our spring concert.

#### Full repertoire for the spring concert:

Tuning Meditation – Pauline Oliveros (1932-2016)	4:00
Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, Op.41, no. 1- Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1849-1893)	3:15
Sure on this shining night – Samuel Barber (1910-1981)	2:30
Under the willow tree (from <i>Vanessa</i> ) – Samuel Barber	2:30
While all things were in quiet silence – Ned Rorem (1932-2022)	2:06
Ambe (Ojibway) – Cory Campbell & Andrew Balfour	2:35
Hark I hear the harps eternal – arr. Alice Parker (1925-2023)	2:25
Les fleurs et les arbres – Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)	2:30
Sérénade Italienne – Ernest Chausson, arr. Mari Esabel Valverde	2:30
When Thunder Comes – Mari Esabel Valverde	4:19
Arise my love (SA) – Joan Szymko	3:45
Seed (commissioned by the Chorale) – Joan Szymko	4:45
Make Our Garden Grow (from <i>Candide</i> ) – Leonard Bernstein (1918-1990)	5:10
Gospel Choir	10:00
Everything That Hath Breath – Jeffery Ames	4:20

In addition, we are looking for a local gospel choir to join us in this concert, to sing a couple of their own pieces and then join the Chorale in the singing of “Everything That Hath Breath” as the closing piece.

**Performances:** May 11, Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley, 1 Lawson Rd, Kensington, 5pm  
May 12, Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave, W.C., 5pm