

**Kennesaw State University
Chamber Singers**

Dr. Leslie J. Blackwell, conductor
John Warren, clarinet
John Lawless, vibraphone

David Maslanka

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

Six Songs

for Chorus, Clarinet and Vibraphone

on poems of Richard Beale

2013

National Collegiate Choral Organization

5th National Conference

Charleston, South Carolina / October 31 - November 2

Program

Kennesaw State University Chamber Singers
Dr. Leslie J. Blackwell, conductor
Sherri N. Barrett, accompanist

DAVID MASLANKA (b. 1943)

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

Six Songs for Chorus, Clarinet and Vibraphone
on poems of Richard Beale

I. The Sleep of Poets

II. Servis Road: A Hymn to St. Francis

Amy Hebel and Shannan O'Dowd, sopranos

Alex Trull, tenor

Timothy Marshall, Jason Raphaël, and Hunter Young, basses

III. The Soundless Sound

IV. On Chestnut Hill

V. Little Dance: For Barbara Mason

VI. A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

Tory Bethune, alto

Joseph McBrayer, tenor

Dylan Gray and Andy Tuttle, basses

John Warren, clarinet

John Lawless, vibraphone

Program Notes

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons (1988) for Chorus, Clarinet and Vibraphone

DAVID MASLANKA (b. 1943)

Duration: 25 minutes

Joseph Campbell, author of *The Power of Myth* and *The Masks of God*, wrote: "We have come forth from the one ground of being as manifestations in the field of time. The field of time is a kind of shadow play over a timeless ground." In music we normally think of sound as the focus of attention, the positive value. Musical sound occurs against a field of silence. If the perception is reversed, musical sound can be seen as a way of framing and of shaping the perception of silence.

Richard Beale's poetry grows out of the silence of the earth and the universe. Each poem rests on this silence and draws its power from it. Each of my six songs is finally a meditation on silence, a way of shaping the perception of the timeless ground.

David Maslanka

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons is a twenty-five minute composition written in six movements for SATB chorus, clarinet and vibraphone, which integrates the poetry of his long time friend Richard Beale. The work premiered in April of 1988, by the University of Connecticut Concert Choir, with Peter Bagley conducting.

The Sleep of Poets

Direct and implied references to God are seen throughout "The Sleep of Poets." The meaning of the text is best expressed through contrasts or opposites and its relationship to the music is essential. According to Maslanka, the vastness of outer space relates to the vastness of one's mind in a dream state, where one is open to hear the "voice of God." The silence one enters in that state is important to the soul for the regeneration of the spirit. "The Sleep of Poets" underscores its majestic opposites though the story telling of the poet's dreams. As one drifts off to sleep drifting further away from conscious thought to unconscious, traveling through the universe from "Mars" to the outer limits of the "crab nebulae," the poet perceives a mysterious sound of the "dit, dit, dit..." This repetitive sound is the cosmic vibration opening to the word or "voice of God" which is now awakened in the subconscious mind.

Servis Road: A Hymn to St. Francis

The text is a complex account of the transformation or spiritual journey from the human condition to the spirit condition through the plight of St. Francis of Assisi. This plight illustrates purification and release through suffering, and underscores the direct imitation of Christ. It is commonly accepted that the body of St. Francis was marked with the stigmata, the seal of Christ. St. Francis accepted and acknowledged the mortification of the body and referred to his body as "Brother Ass." This reference refers to the human condition struggling to reach Christ-like purity. In an attempt to heal an illness in his infected eye, St. Francis was cauterized with "hot irons" leaving him blind. St. Francis also believed that the life of indigent poverty increased the awareness of the human condition and that

the human body was merely a vessel. The paradox is crucial to understanding St. Francis referencing himself as "another blinded man" both physically and spiritually.

The Soundless Sound

"The Soundless Sound" is built upon single sounds, echo effects, and free metrical rhythms. According to Maslanka this movement is about beautiful moments and the perception of those moments. Those moments are created by discontinuous sounds articulated separately. The melodic lines are constructed from the most difficult of musical pitches, the interval of a tritone. The meaning of the poetry is the contradiction or paradox between sound and silence. The "soundless sound" is further representative of the breath, which metaphysically represents life as heard in the text, "one hears nothing if not the soundless sound." The movement concludes with the interval of a tritone hauntingly intoned by the vibraphone.

On Chestnut Hill

"On Chestnut Hill" questions the existence of God through contrasting imagery. Tangible elements of "walking among the grass," watching a yellow moon begin its rise, the ideas of night and day are contrasted with intangible ideas of faith. These images create a beautiful and vivid landscape for two important questions: "Is this Phantom real who made both night and day?"; and "Is it wise to wish the night away?" According to Maslanka, through meditation the perception that arises out of the night when one sleeps is an awareness of the "Phantom" as God. Further, when sleep leads to unhappy dreams and nightmares, which promote a negative image, God can be found. The poem never answers the two questions; that is left for each of us to discover and answer for ourselves.

Little Dance: For Barbara Mason

"Little Dance: For Barbara Mason" is cast in an ABA form incorporating musical elements from the past. Movement five utilizes Baroque dance rhythms, imitative counterpoint, fugal procedures, and textual elements of sixteenth century madrigals. The inspiration for this movement came from Barbara Mason, dancer and friend of the librettist, Richard Beale. The interpretation of the poetry is best understood as a journey from the mundane to the eternal on the pathway to enlightenment. The poet speaks of his limitations being that of "time and space": the poet is alluding to human beings being vulnerable. The most profound is at childbirth when we enter this world free of any preconceptions. The "dance" is a metaphor for life and refers to the journey taken in our earthly existence and that when we die "boundaries cave in" and our spirit or soul flies. It is "in this moment and no other" that we truly exist and our enlightened, for "in this moment and no other I am." The text "I am" is also translated in Hebrew as the word Yahweh meaning God. Maslanka believes that each individual is part of God, and therefore each person is God. Thus, "I am" represents God in human form.

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

"A Litany for Courage and the Seasons," is a prayer of contemplation and reflection. The text is sincere, introspective, and questions the meaning of life. The

text is a listing or "litany" of things for which to be thankful for in a year's passing of time. The poetry reflects the cycle of life as compared to the cycle of the four seasons. The prayer is interrupted by thoughts of philosophical doubts interjected by the tenor soloist on the most poignant moment of the entire composition:

I am not sure that by myself I would pray for all these things.
But if I did not pray, not even knowing what I pray to,
I would lose my reason.

The text further represents the hopes and desires of the poet as he ages and is heard in the last reflection and flourish of the clarinet as a final prayer for his spirit when he dies:

May my spirit be waiting for them in the trees.

- Leslie J. Blackwell

Composer David Maslanka was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1943. He attended the Oberlin College Conservatory where he studied composition with Joseph Wood. He spent a year at the Mozarteum in Salzburg, Austria, and did graduate work in composition at Michigan State University with H. Owen Reed.

Maslanka is recognized internationally for his symphonic compositions, percussion works as well as his wind ensemble music. They include among others, *A Child's Garden of Dreams* for Symphonic Wind Ensemble, *Concerto for Piano, Winds and Percussion*, the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th symphonies, *Mass* for soloists, chorus, boys chorus, wind orchestra and organ, and the two Wind Quintets. Percussion works include *Variations of 'Lost Love'* and *My Lady White*: for solo marimba, and three ensemble works: *Arcadia II: Concerto for Marimba and Percussion Ensemble*, *Crown of Thorns*, and *Montana Music: Three Dances for Percussion*. In addition, he has written a wide variety of chamber, orchestral, and choral pieces.

David Maslanka's compositions are published by Carl Fischer, Inc., David Maslanka Publications, Kjos Music Company, Marimba Productions, Inc., the North American Saxophone Alliance, and OU Percussion Press, and have been recorded on Albany, Cambria, CRI, Mark, Novisse, and Klavier labels. He has served on the faculties of the State University of New York at Geneseo, Sarah Lawrence College, New York University, and Kingsborough College of the City University of New York. He now lives in Missoula, Montana. David Maslanka is a member of ASCAP.

Text

A Litany for Courage and the Seasons

I. The Sleep of Poets

The sleep of poets is but a travelogue of dream,
Mars tonight and the crab nebulae tomorrow.
Hear dit-dit-dit--
The voice of God.
The colorless silences are his paragraphs,
Dark holes the dimples of his mind.

O come morning with your vivid dawn
And your rain and winds
To see if you can rival
The augury and majesty of dream!

II. Servis Road: A Hymn to St. Francis

After a hard winter of work spring comes at last,
With warming winds which find even the deepest culverts.
In my heart St. Francis is stirring.
His blindness and the remedy of hot irons disrupts me
As I walk along this country road.
I wonder what God could have done to prepare a man for that,
Both the pain and the disfiguration.
I ask St. Francis to pray for me
Because I need the recommendation of a good man.

The sky is blue with no clouds.
The freshets gurgle pleasantly beneath the sounds
Of countless peepers and new birds.
I walk along briskly, remembering my body,
Trying to awaken it from a long chill,
As though it had been asleep under the snow.
The sun surrounds me with a flowing light
And shows me the configurations and colors
Of things I have come to know and love.

I wonder why my own blindness was not healed by this transfiguration.
Blessed Francis, guide me through my awakening
While my spirit is still heavy with sleep
And while I have trouble focusing my eyes.

Speaking is a way of knowing
Psalms from a lover's soul,
On the heart's hearth newly glowing
Like ignited coal.

The fire's brand along the temples
And the smell of burning hair--
The love of God impeached the troubles
Brother Ass imprisoned there.

Scarred and blistered and blinded still
With ulcers on both feet and hands
Blessed Francis, share your loving
With another blinded man.

III. The Soundless Sound

The soft crackling of the rain
On dry leaves
And the echo of the birdsong
Against the woods--
Are these all one hears between breathing in and breathing out?

One hears nothing if not
The soundless sound.

IV. On Chestnut Hill

On Chestnut Hill I lean against the wind.
I walk among the grass and the Solomon's Seal
And watch the yellow moon begin its rise.
I lie where the deer have lain,
And ask the sky impossible questions:
Is this phantom real who made both night and day?

Is it wise to wish the night away?

V. Little Dance: For Barbara Mason

Pushing back the walls,
Stretching for freedom,
Time and space were the fringes
Of my limitation.

With only my skin for a costume,
And no script at all
I offer a careful bow
To the beings [creatures] beyond the dark.

Perhaps this little dance
Will please the dead and the unseen,
And then the boundaries will cave in,
And then my spirit will fly.

In this moment and no other,
In this way and no other,
I am.

VI. A Litany For Courage and the Seasons

May the apple blossoms flower on my birthday.
May my heart be calmed if it snows on the jonquils.
May the hot days of summer be made tolerable by a little rain.
[May I get wisdom if the flowers die.]
May the Fall not come too soon, and if it does
May the maples splash enough color to seem warm, not cold.
May I be thankful on Thanksgiving, even though I might not remember what for,
And be joyful at Christmas, for the same reason.

I am not sure that by myself I would pray for all these things.
But if I did not pray, not even knowing what I pray to,
I would lose my reason.

May God come and stay in my heart through the round of seasons.
May God make me love each season more, though none are new.
And if I should die before the birds come back from the South
May my spirit be waiting for them in the trees.

Personnel

Kennesaw State University Chamber Singers

SOPRANO	CLASS RANK	DEGREE	HIGH SCHOOL
Burnham, Vanessa	Senior	B.S. Anthropology Voice Minor	Northgate
Caracci, Victoria	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	Harrison
Crisp, Emily	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	North Cobb
Eckart, Sydney	Freshman	B.M. Voice Performance	Chattahoochee
Gibson, Megan	Sophomore	B.M. Education	Riverwood
Hebel, Amy	Junior	B.M. Voice Performance	Fayette County
Hoffman, Carley	Junior	B.B.A. Accounting	Kennesaw Mountain
Naffziger, Ashley	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	Dominion Christian
O'Dowd, Shannan	Sophomore	B.M. Choral Education	Collins
Rodriguez, Siobhan	Senior	B.S. Communications/ Public Relations	Pebblebrook
ALTO			
Bethune, Tory	Senior	B.M. Choral Education	Paulding
Callender, Naarah	Sophomore	B.M. Choral Education	Dacula
Hathaway, Camille	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	The Glynn Academy
Martin, Karen	Senior	B.A. Music/ Music Business	Providence Christian Academy
Mitchell, Julie	Junior	B.M. Choral Education B.M. Composition	Kennesaw Mountain
Reyes, Susan (Susy)	Freshman	B.M. Voice Performance Education	North Cobb
Royer, Kim	Junior	B.M. Choral Education	Campbell
Scott, Madeline	Senior	B.M. Voice Performance	Sequoya
Werner, Paris	Sophomore	Undeclared	Kennesaw

TENOR	CLASS RANK	DEGREE	HIGH SCHOOL
Davis, Kristopher	Senior	B.B.A. Accounting	North Cobb
Donaldson, Eric	Senior	B.M. Education	Villa Rica
Glover, Jacob	Freshman	B.M. Choral Education	Hebron Christian Academy
McBrayer, Joseph	Senior	B.M. Voice Performance	East Paulding
Pendleton, Terry	Senior	B.F.A. Theatre Performance	Greater Atlanta Christian
St. Dic, Travis	Senior	Undeclared	Johns Creek
Starr, Forrest	Freshman	B.M. Choral Education	Hiram
Trull, Alex	Senior	B.M. Voice Performance	Lee County
Turner, Alex	Sophomore	B.S. Psychology	Grayson
Van Buskirk, Brian	Senior	B.S. Computer Science	North Cobb

BASS

Bart, Michael	Freshman	B.M. Music Education/ Voice Performance	Forsyth Central
Cass, Michael	Junior	B.S. Interdisciplinary Studies	Kennesaw Mountain
Eliason, Sean	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	Kennesaw Mountain
Gray, Dylan	Sophomore	B.S. Communications	Davidson Fine Arts Academy
Hidalgo, Daniel	Freshman	Undeclared	Whitewater
Johnson, Erinn	Sophomore	B.B.A. Business Management	Salem
Marshall, Timothy	Sophomore	B.M. Voice Performance	North Cobb
Raphael, Jason	Freshman	B.M. Choral Education	Cherokee
Tuttle, Andy	Senior	B.B.A. Marketing	Lassiter
Young, Hunter	Sophomore	B.S. Information Security and Assurance	Home School

Biographies

Leslie J. Blackwell is the Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music and Music Education at Kennesaw State University where she has directed choral activities since 1998. Dr. Blackwell's duties include conducting the KSU Men's Ensemble and KSU Chamber Singers as well as teaching advanced choral conducting and literature along with supervision of student teachers. A native of Georgia, Blackwell received the Associate of Arts degree from Gordon Junior College (1982), the Bachelor of Music in Music Education from West Georgia College (1984), the Master of Music from Georgia State University (1991), and the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Kentucky (2002).



Choirs under Dr. Blackwell's direction have performed at National, Regional, and State conferences of the American Choral Directors Association as well as numerous Georgia Music Educators Association State Conventions. In 2010 Dr. Blackwell presented *Songs of South America* for the American Choral Directors Association with the KSU Chamber Singers, featuring music of South America based upon her choral research and work

in Argentina. In October 2013 the KSU Chamber Singers was selected to perform at the National Collegiate Choral Organization 5th National Conference.

Recognized for her work with men's voices, Dr. Blackwell served six seasons as the Artistic Director of the Atlanta Gay Men's Chorus, conducted the 2013 Georgia All-State Men's Chorus, and established the KSU Male Chorus Day at Kennesaw State University, bringing upwards of 200 high school male students to campus. In 2007, the KSU Men's Ensemble was featured at the Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference presentation, "Men Can't Live with Them, Can't Sing without Them!" The KSU Men's Ensemble performed at the 2012 Georgia Music Educators Association In-Service Conference in Savannah, Georgia and was a featured choir at the American Choral Directors Association State Conference at Spivey Hall in summer, 2013. Most recently, the Kennesaw State University Men's Ensemble was selected to perform at the 2013 American Choral Directors National Conference in Dallas, Texas.

Influential musicians with whom Dr. Blackwell has worked are Robert Shaw, Ann Howard-Jones, Yoel Levi, Norma Raybon, John Haberman, Rodney Eichenberger, David Maslanka, Ola Gjeilo, Ethan Sperry, and Jefferson Johnson.

In addition to her commitments at Kennesaw State University, Dr. Blackwell is active as a clinician and adjudicator and holds memberships in MENC, GMEA, and ACDA. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Georgia ACDA. Currently, Dr. Blackwell is the Artistic Director and Founding Director of the Kennesaw State University Community & Alumni Choir.

John Warren joined the Kennesaw State University faculty in 2006. His previous University affiliations include Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia, and The University of Nebraska at Omaha. He was for fifteen years the principal clarinetist of the Savannah Symphony Orchestra and prior to that position,

the principal clarinetist of the Omaha Symphony. He served as principal clarinetist of the Des Moines Metro Opera for many summers prior to arriving in Atlanta. At KSU, Mr. Warren teaches studio clarinet, wind chamber music, and Woodwind Techniques.

Originally from Shreveport, Louisiana, Mr. Warren holds Degrees from the University of Cincinnati College/Conservatory of Music and The Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. His most influential teachers include Donald Montanaro, L. Thomas LeGrand, and Richard Waller.



He has performed as soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the IRIS Orchestra, the Curtis Institute Orchestra, and the Symphonies of Savannah, Omaha, Hilton Head, and Beaufort, SC.

As a recitalist and chamber musician, Mr. Warren has appeared at the Aspen Music Festival, the Evian Festival, and the Highlands Chamber Music Festival. During March of 2013, he performed a series of concerts throughout northern Italy with the New Chicago Chamber Orchestra Woodwind Quintet, returning in July as a featured performer at the International Clarinet Association's convention in Assisi.

Mr. Warren is a member of the Atlanta Opera Orchestra, the IRIS Orchestra of Memphis, TN, as well as performing and recording with the Atlanta Symphony. His playing can be heard on the Telarc, Naxos, Albany, and New World labels.

John Lawless became the Director of Percussion Studies at Kennesaw State University in 2004. Principal Timpanist of the Atlanta Opera orchestra since 1979, John held the same position with the Chattanooga Symphony for 21 years. Since 1978, Mr. Lawless has performed, toured, and recorded with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra while maintaining a thriving freelance career as a studio and pit percussionist.

A founding member of the Atlanta Percussion Trio, Mr. Lawless performs hundreds of school concerts a year for thousands of children throughout the Southeastern United States. Along with Scott Douglas and Karen Hunt, the trio has been a performing group for 30 years, bringing educational programs to children of all ages.



As a soloist, Mr. Lawless played several concertos with the Chattanooga Symphony, including: The Olympian for 8 timpani and orchestra as well as The Messenger for multiple percussion and orchestra, both written by James Oliverio. In 2009 Mr. Lawless performed Joseph Schwantner's Concerto for Percussion with the Cobb Symphony Orchestra.

A graduate of Georgia State University, Mr. Lawless' teachers include Tom Float, Jack Bell, Cloyd Duff, Paul Yancich, Bill Wilder, and Mark Yancich. Previous faculty appointments include those at Georgia State University, Clark Atlanta University, and West Georgia State University.

About the Ensemble

The Kennesaw State University Chamber Singers is the premiere choral ensemble at Kennesaw State University, Northwest Georgia's major university located in Kennesaw, Georgia. Ranging from freshmen to seniors, the choir is open to all students including both music majors and non-majors from across campus and represents a variety of musical backgrounds and academic disciplines. The KSU Chamber Singers have performed master works of Bach, Haydn, Duruflé, Mozart, Britten, and most recently *Brahms Ein Deutsches Requiem*. In the spring of 2012, the KSU Chamber Singers, KSU Chorale, and KSU Symphony Orchestra performed Beethoven's Ninth Symphony broadcast on Atlanta 90.1WABE. The KSU Chambers Singers performed at the 2002, 2006, 2008, and 2011 Georgia Music Educators Association State Conferences. In 2010, the choir was invited to sing at the American Choral Directors Association Southern Division Conference in Memphis, Tennessee, presenting music of South America.

Kennesaw State University Choral and Voice Faculty

Dr. Leslie J. Blackwell
Director of Choral Activities

Dr. Alison Mann
Choral Music Education

Dr. Adam Kirkpatrick, voice
Dr. Oral Moses, voice
Eileen Moremen, voice
Valerie Walters, voice
Jana Young, voice
Dr. Russell Young, KSU Opera Theatre,
vocal coach

Kennesaw State University School of Music

The School of Music at KSU has dedicated, vibrant, and talented faculty and staff that are completely devoted to teaching, performing, scholarship, and serving our community. It is an incredibly exciting place to study, boasting state-of-the-art facilities with opportunities to produce and explore music in a dynamic place that is ahead of the curve for what it means to be a musician in the 21st century. Our students come from the leading musical honor organizations across the region and are poised to lead the cultural offerings and musical education in our area and beyond for years to come.

We welcome you to attend a concert, meet our faculty and staff, and feel the energy and excitement that our students exude. We are fully committed to our purpose as educators, performers, and scholars. We hope that you will find as much enjoyment in our product as we do in producing it.

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