

UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS

Fall Concert

NOV. 19, 2026

1:00 PM

ARTS COMPLEX

REHEARSAL HALL

Middle Georgia State University

SCHOOL OF ARTS & LETTERS

partment of Media, Culture, & The A

MGA Music Program

FALL CONCERT

Thursday, November 19, 2026
1:00 PM

UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS

Gerald Lee Ricks
CONDUCTOR

Dr. Rebecca Lanning
ACCOMPANIST

AMEN, SIAKUDUMISA

arr. John L. Bell
b. 1949

TAZEN UND SPRINGEN

Hans Leo Hassler
1564-1612

Tanzen und springen,
Singen und klingen,
Lauten und Geigen
Soll'n auch nicht schweigen,
Zu musizieren
Und jubilieren steht mir all mein Sinn.

Schöne Jungfrauen
In grünen Auen,
Mit ihn'n spazieren
Und conversieren,
Freundlich zu scherzen,
Freut mich im Herzen für Silber und Gold.

Dancing and jumping
Singing and ringing
Lutes and violins
Do not be silent
To play music
and be jubilant is all I can think of.

There are beautiful young women
In the green pastures
With them to walk and talk
To have a friendly joke
Makes me happier in my heart than silver and Gold.
- Elizabeth Pauly

GEORGIA ON MY MIND

arr. Ed Lojeski
b. 1942

CAN WE SING THE DARKNESS TO LIGHT?

Kyle Pederson
b. 1971

WITH MY WHOLE HEART

Nolan Williams Jr.
b. 1969

I'M GONNA SING 'TIL THE SPIRIT MOVES IN MY HEART

Moses Hogan
1957-2003

OUR SINGERS

SOPRANO

Hannah Evans, Music Production, Byron, GA
Minya Hamilton, Political Science, St Catherine, Jamaica
Sydney S. Johnson, Music Production, Macon, GA
Brianna Lang, Music Industry Covington, GA
Angelina Rice, Psychology, Henan Province, China
Lindel Shockley, Nursing, Marked Tree, AK

ALTO

Jena Branch, Liberal Arts, Warner Robins, GA
Jillian Jackson, Music Industry, Niceville, FL
Abigail Kerr, English, Forsyth, GA
Faatima Phillips, Music Production, DeKalb GA
Bryonna Stephens, Music Industry, Baltimore, MD

TENOR

Evan Bentzel, Music Production, Macon, GA
Keon Clark, Music Production, Clarkston, GA
Deon Trowell, Music Production, Louisville, KY
Waymond Robinson, III, Music Production, Fort Valley, GA

BASS

Jason Detter, Music Production, Hartwell, GA
Jordan George, Music Production, Atlanta, GA
Kyrin Hill, Respiratory Therapy, Nashville, GA
Kody K. Jones, Music Production, Keflavik, Iceland
Justin Keith, Mechanical Engineering, Macon, GA
Atlas Moon, Music Production, Macon, GA

PROGRAM NOTES

“Amen, Siakudumisa”

“Amen, Siakudumisa” (“Amen, sing praise to the Lord”) is one of many hymns and liturgical pieces written by South African composer Stephen Cuthbert Molefe. It was transcribed and collected in 1977 by David Dargie, a Roman Catholic priest and ethnomusicologist. In the decades following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Dargie encouraged African Christians to worship in their own languages and musical styles, rather than remaining confined to the European words and tunes which, for many, were associated with centuries of colonization. In South African church services, “Amen, Siakudumisa” is sometimes sung as a doxology or part of the Eucharist liturgy. In this arrangement by Scottish composer John L. Bell, the hymn begins in simple unison, with additional harmonies and solos added as the hymn is repeated first in Xhosa, then in English, inviting worshippers to praise together across continents and cultures.

“Tanzen und Springen”

Seventeenth-century German composer Hans Leo Hassler is best known as the author of “Mein Gemüt ist mir verwirret,” (“My mind is in confusion”), a song whose melody Johann Sebastian Bach later arranged as a chorale in his St. Matthew Passion, later simplified for congregational use into the hymn “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” Hassler’s madrigal “Tanzen und Springen” (“Dancing and Jumping”) shows a livelier, more lighthearted side to Hassler’s work, inviting hearers to make the most of their youthful energy with dancing, singing, and a bit of flirtation.

“Georgia on My Mind”

Written 1930 by Indiana songwriters Hoagy Carmichael and Stuart Gorrell, “Georgia on my Mind” is thought by some to be a tribute to Carmichael’s younger sister Georgia, though Carmichael himself described the song as an effort to capitalize on the sentimental appeal of the American South. Whoever or wherever the “Georgia” of the lyrics might have been, the midwesterners’ song went on to be covered and recorded by many prominent musicians, including Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Django Reinhart, Ella Fitzgerald, and, most famously, Ray Charles. The General Assembly of Georgia voted in 1979 to adopt Charles’s version as the state’s official song. Ed Lojeski’s a capella choral arrangement captures wistful, dreamlike mood of the “moonlight through the pines” in this “old sweet song.”

“Can we Sing the Darkness to Light?”

Kyle Pederson began his professional life as a middle school geography teacher, frequently taking advantage of the piano in the corner of his classroom to create songs and jingles to help his students remember geographical names and facts. Later, as co-founder of the education company Learner’s Edge, he designed courses and workshops to train other educators to use music as a teaching tool. After nearly two

decades in education, Pederson decided in 2013 to pursue a career in music composition, concluding that "nothing provided the sheer joy and feeling of aliveness as creating music and hearing it come to life." Pederson's choral compositions often dwell on the transformative power of community, kindness, hope, and justice. In "Can we Sing the Darkness to Light?" he challenges listeners, in his own words, to "imagine a world without weapons or war—where the human experience is defined not through continued judgment of others, but through the lens of mercy and compassion." As the song's refrain repeatedly affirms, "It could be beautiful."

"With My Whole Heart"

Nolan Williams, Jr., has gained international recognition through a wide variety of art projects that support justice and civil rights. His projects range from films (Becoming Douglass Commonwealth, I have a Right to Vote, Rise Up and Fight) to theatre (GRACE, Stirring the Waters Across America) to instrumental and vocal music in many genres. As co-editor of two hymnals, he is well-versed in the congregational worship music of many Christian traditions, and this experience is reflected in his song "With my Whole Heart."

"I'm Gonna Sing 'Til the Spirit Moves in my Heart"

New Orleans-born composer Moses Hogan grew to love music at an early age, observing his chorister father and his choir director uncle at the A. L. Davis New Zion Baptist Church. He grew to be perhaps the twentieth century's best-loved and most prolific arranger of African-American spirituals, creating over eighty arrangements before dying of a brain tumor in 2003 at age forty-five. His style, which an L. A. Times critic described as "tricky, eloquent, and unpredictable," is on full display in this energetic arrangement of "I'm Gonna Sing 'Til the Spirit Moves in my Heart." In its fast-moving, syncopated rhythms and its suddenly-swirling harmonies, it evokes the New Testament's fiery Pentecost narrative (Acts 2), in which the Holy Spirit descended on Christ's followers in the form of tongues of flame.

Program Notes by: Dr. Mary Christian, Associate Professor of English, Middle Georgia State University

OUR STAFF

GERALD LEE RICKS, CONDUCTOR

Gerald Lee Ricks is an educator, conductor, worship arts practitioner, and nonprofit executive whose work bridges music performance, higher education, leadership, and community engagement. He currently serves as Executive Director of Boggs Rural Life Center, Inc., a historic educational institution and preservation organization in Keysville, Georgia, where he leads initiatives focused on historic preservation, agriculture, and rural community development.

Ricks holds a Master of Music in Choral Conducting with an emphasis in Church Music from Mercer University, a Bachelor of Arts in Vocal Performance and Human Resource Management from Georgia Southwestern State University, and an Associate of Science in Education from Middle Georgia State University (formerly Macon State College).

Throughout his career, Ricks has served in leadership positions across higher education, churches, and nonprofit organizations. He previously served as Adjunct Professor and director of the Voices of Imani Gospel Choir at Emory University's Candler School of Theology and has held music leadership positions at National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C., Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, and congregations throughout the United Methodist Church in the metropolitan Atlanta area. He also served as Guest Artist Coordinator for the Cathedral Choral Society at Washington National Cathedral and currently serves as Director of Worship for the 2028 Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church.

Ricks has collaborated with nationally recognized organizations, including the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and the Cathedral Choral Society. His artistic collaborations include performances with Grammy Award-winning artist Anthony Hamilton, Michael W. Smith, and Kandi Burress. He is a frequent guest conductor and worship architect in the life of the United Methodist Church.

Ricks is an inaugural member of Chorus America's Choral Executive Leadership Academy and currently participates in the Capacity Building Cohort of the Central Savannah River Area Community Foundation. His scholarship and professional interests include African American sacred music traditions, gospel music history, choral conducting, worship studies, leadership development, arts administration, and the role of music in cultural preservation and community transformation.

OUR STAFF

DR. REBECCA LANNING, ACCOMPANIST

Rebecca Lanning is noted for her rich, distinctive sound. She has performed in recital, opera, and oratorio throughout the U.S. and in France. Symphonic appearances include the Central Florida Symphony, Valdosta Symphony, Albany Symphony, Georgia Symphony, and Macon Symphony. Devoted to modern music, she performed the world premiere of McNair's Judas Wind with the Macon Symphony Orchestra and the Georgia premier of Einhorn's The Spires, the City, the Field with the Albany Symphony Orchestra. She was named Young Artist of the Year by the Gretchen Bunche Endowed Recital Series, and received the Irvin Bushman Award at the National Association of Teachers of Singing Artist Auditions. As a member of Robert Shaw's Chamber Singers and Festival Singers, she has performed several times at Carnegie Hall.

A versatile musician, Dr. Lanning received degrees in Voice and continued with graduate studies in Music History at Ohio University. Her doctorate is interdisciplinary and focused on the relationship between the arts and public policy. Other research areas include private/public artistic partnerships and music entrepreneurship.

An active choral conductor, Dr. Lanning has presented choral master classes and clinics throughout Georgia. She holds the rank of Professor of Music at Middle Georgia State University and received the Outstanding Teaching Award in 2009 and the Outstanding Service Award in 2019.



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