Dessoff Dialogue:
Dessoff Strong – The Song Continues

The Dessoff Choirs
Monday, May 24, 2021
7PM
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The Dessoff Choirs  
Malcolm J. Merriweather, Music Director  
Steven Ryan, piano & organ

Dessoff Strong: The Song Continues

Dies irae from Requiem  
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)  
Sopranos: Kathy Wolf, Kirsten Gorsak, Julie Siegmund  
Altos: Carol Shapiro, Barbara Scharf Schamest, Lisa Grow, Christina Peter, Paola Nuñez  
Tenors: Steve Brautigam, Andy Willett, Christopher Ebert  
Bass: Steve Kass, Michael Prachthauser, Buddy Menton, Christopher Platt

Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr  
Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)  
Sopranos: Kathy Wolf, Julie Siegmund, Tina Fairweather  
Altos: Amanda Kelly

Dona nobis pacem from the Mass in B minor  
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)  
Sopranos: Kathy Wolf, Julie Siegmund, Tina Fairweather  
Altos: Carol Shapiro, Barbara Scharf Schamest, Christina Peter, Paola Nuñez, Martha Hollander  
Tenors: Steve Brautigam, Christopher Ebert, Steve Kass  
Bass: Steve Winn, Ryan Mesina, Dick Hadsell

In memoriam:  
Erika Rohrbach, Eric Hansen, Steven Lanser

Oseh Shalom  
Nurit Hirsh, arr. Elaine Ginsburg  
Sopranos: Kathy Wolf, Julie Siegmund  
Altos: Barbara Scharf Schamest, Lisa Grow, Martha Hollander, Liz Hollander  
Tenors: Jon Lowy, Steve Kass  
Bass: Steve Winn, Richard Hadsell, Michael Prachthauser

The Negro Speaks of Rivers  
Margaret Bonds (1913-1972)  
Sopranos: Jen Crawford, Tina Fairweather, Jessie Barbour, Kathryn Singleton  
Altos: Amanda Kelly, Kirsten Gorsak, Liz Hollander, JC Jarbi  
Tenors: Jon Lowy, Christopher Ebert  
Bass: Christopher Platt, Michael Prachthauser, John Stolen

Hold Fast To Dreams  
Florence Price (1887-1953)  
Malcolm J. Merriweather, baritone
You’ll Never Walk Alone

Richard Rogers, arr. Mark Hayes

Sopranos: Jen Crawford, Tina Fairweather, Jessie Barbour, Kathryn Singleton
Altos: Amanda Kelly, Kirsten Gorsak, Liz Hollander, Martha Hollander
Tenors: Jon Lowy, Christopher Ebert
Bass: Christopher Platt, Michael Prachthausen

Steven Ryan, piano & organ

Video Production:

Sekou Luke, director
Devon Howard, sound engineer
Joshua Wells Broaden, camera

Managing Director
Mic Herring

The Dessoff season is made possible in part by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

This program is sponsored in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.
Texts

Dies Irae from Requiem
W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)

Dies irae, dies illa
Solvet saeclum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.
Quantus tremor est futurus
Quando judex est venturus
Cuncta stricte discussurus.

Day of wrath, that day
Will dissolve the earth in ashes
As David and the Sibyl bear witness.
What dread there will be
When the Judge shall come
To judge all things strictly.

Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr
Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707)

Herzlich lieb hab ich dich, o Herr.
Ich bitt, wollst sein von mir nicht fern
Mit deiner Hülf und Gnaden.
Die ganze Welt erfreut mich nicht,
Nach Himmel und Erd frag ich nicht,
Wenn ich dich nur, Herr, habe.
Und wenn mir gleich mein Herz zerbricht,
So bist du doch mein Zuversicht,
Mein Teil und meines Herzens Trost,
Der mich durch sein Blut hat erlöst.
Herr Jesu Christ,
Mein Gott und Herr, mein Gott und Herr,
In Schanden laß mich nimmermehr!

I love you tenderly, o Lord.
I pray, be not far from me
With thy help and grace.
The whole world does not delight me,
I do not ask for heaven or earth,
If I can only have you.
And even if my heart should break,
Yet you are still my confidence,
My portion and my heart's comfort,
Who has redeemed me through his blood.
Lord Jesus Christ,
My God and Lord, my God and Lord,
Let me never more be put to shame!

Dona nobis pacem from the Mass in B minor
J.S. Bach (1685-1750)

Dona nobis pacem

Give us peace

Oseh Shalom

Nurit Hirsh, arr. by Elaine Broad-Ginsburg

Oseh shalom bimromav
Hu ya'aseh shalom aleynu
Ve'al kol Yisrael
Ve'imru Amen

He who makes peace in his high places
He shall make peace upon us
And upon all of Israel
And say Amen
Hold Fast To Dreams

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.

The Negro Speaks of Rivers
Margaret Bonds (1913-1972) Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the
flow of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln
went down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy
bosom turn all golden in the sunset.
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
You'll Never Walk Alone (with Climb Every Mountain)

When you walk through a storm
Hold your head up high
And don't be afraid of the dark.
At the end of the storm
Is a golden sky
And the sweet silver song of a lark.

Walk on through the wind,
Walk on through the rain,
Tho' your dreams be tossed and blown.
Walk on, walk on
With hope in your heart
And you'll never walk alone,
You'll never walk alone.

Climb every mountain,
Search high and low,
Follow every highway,
Every path you know.

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream.
Follow every rainbow
'Till you find your dream!

A dream that will need
All the love you can give,
Every day of your life,
For as long as you live.

Climb every mountain,
Ford every stream.
Follow every rainbow
'Till you find your dream!
The Dessoff Choirs, one of the leading choruses in New York City, is an independent chorus with an established reputation for pioneering performances of choral works from the Renaissance era through the 21st century. Since its founding in 1924, Dessoff’s mission is to enrich the lives of its audiences and members through the performance of choral music.

Its concerts, professional collaborations, community outreach, and educational initiatives are dedicated to stimulating public interest in and appreciation of choral music as an art form that enhances the culture and life of our times. With repertoire ranging over a wide variety of eras and styles, Dessoff’s musical acumen and flexibility has been recognized with invitations from major orchestras for oratorios and orchestral works.

Past performances include Britten’s War Requiem and Mahler’s Symphony No. 8 with Lorin Maazel in his final performances as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. Over the course of its 97-year history, Dessoff has presented numerous world premieres, including works by Virgil Thomson, George Perle, Paul Moravec, and Ricky Ian Gordon; the first American performance in nearly 100 years of Montemezzi’s opera La Nave, with Teatro Grattacielo; and the American premieres of Philip Glass’s Symphony No. 5, and Sir John Tavener’s all-night vigil, The Veil of the Temple.

Dessoff’s recent discography includes three CDs: MARGARET BONDS: The Ballad of the Brown King & Selected Songs, released in November 2019; Reflections (1997), featuring music by Convery, Corigliano, Moravec, and Rorem; and Glories on Glories (2009), a collection of American song featuring composers from Billings to Ives.

The Dessoff Choirs is supported in part by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council. Dessoff’s season is made possible in part by funds from The New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. Please visit dessoff.org for more information.
Conductor Malcolm J. Merriweather is Music Director of The Dessoff Choirs, founded in 1924, and known for pathbreaking performances of choral works from the pre-Baroque era through the 21st century. Merriweather enjoys a versatile career with performances ranging from the songs of Margaret Bonds to gems of the symphonic choral repertoire. The baritone can be heard on the GRAMMY nominated recording of Paul Moravec’s *Sanctuary Road* (NAXOS). Hailed by Opera News as “moving...expertly interpreted,” Margaret Bonds: *The Ballad of the Brown King & Selected Songs* (AVIE) has earned considerable praise around the world.

Merriweather is excited to resume in-person rehearsals and concerts. Highlights of his 2021-2022 season include the world premiere performance and recording of *Credo* and *Simon Bore the Cross* by Margaret Bonds; a performance at the Metropolitan Museum of Art entitled, *The Beauty of Holiness*; and performances with Syracuse Opera, North Carolina Opera, and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra. During the pandemic, Merriweather’s 2020-2021 season has been enriched with guest lectures and virtual appearances around the world, most notably at Yale University and Columbia University. He has inaugurated a series of virtual events entitled “Dessoff Dialogues.” These conversations emphasize matters of social justice, equity, and inclusion as they relate to classical music and the choral art.

Merriweather’s 2019-2020 season included Fauré’s Requiem; Rutter’s *The Sprig of Thyme*; and Gregg Smith’s *Continental Harmonist* with The Dessoff Choirs. He was engaged by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra for Paul Moravec’s *Sanctuary Road*, and at the Eastman School of Music for the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Division Conference in Benjamin Britten’s *War Requiem*. The COVID-19 global pandemic forced cancellations with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, a 60-member children’s choir in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, operated by the Andrea Bocelli Foundation.

An Associate Professor, he is Director of Choral Studies and Voice Department Coordinator at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, and the Artistic Director of “Voices of Haiti,” a 60-member children’s choir in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, operated by the Andrea Bocelli Foundation.

Merriweather holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Conducting from the studio of Kent Tritle at the Manhattan School of Music, where his doctoral dissertation “Now I walk in Beauty, Gregg Smith: A Biography and Complete Works Catalog” constituted the first complete works list for the...
composer and conductor. He received Master of Music degrees in Choral Conducting and in Vocal Performance from the studio of Rita Shane at the Eastman School of Music, as well as his Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from Syracuse University, summa cum laude. His professional affiliations include membership in Pi Kappa Lambda, the American Choral Directors Association, and Chorus America. Connect with him on Twitter and Instagram @maestroweather.

Steven Ryan, piano, has been Dessoff’s accompanist and keyboard soloist since 1997, including featured performances in all of Dessoff’s Midwinter Festivals. In February 2017, Dessoff’s “French Fête” concert was a celebration of his 20th anniversary with the group. In recent years, Mr. Ryan has performed in Russia, Austria, France, and Italy. In 2014, he was featured in the Voices Across the Pacific festival in Sydney, Australia, playing a solo concert and working with choirs. He has performed several solos with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and the Greater Trenton Symphony Orchestra.

Ryan has played celesta with the Berlin Philharmonic at Carnegie Hall; piano, harpsichord, and organ with Dessoff; and synthesizer with the Moody Blues. Conductors he has collaborated with include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Charles Dutoit, Neeme Järvi, Sir Neville Mariner, Gerard Schwartz, and Maxim Shostakovich.

Ryan is a regular accompanist at Montclair State University, working with the choirs and in both the voice and string studios. He participated in Montclair’s 2015 concerts at Sadler’s Wells Theatre in London and at the Isaac Stern Auditorium at Carnegie Hall. In 2000, he won second prize at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition for Outstanding Amateurs, and in 2001 he took first place in the Concours des Grand Amateurs de Piano in France.

Want to join us in song all season long? We’ll be looking for a few good singers to join Dessoff starting in September 2021. Watch for our Audition announcement in August 2021.
Contributing Membership

We thank each and every one of you for your generous contributions which has helped keep us afloat during this last year!

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*Sally White
Steven A Winn
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Friend (Up to $99)
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Now, more than ever, your support is instrumental!

Your gift to The Dessoff Choirs today will help us continue to make extraordinary music for music lovers like you throughout the year.

Donate at dessoff.org today!

The Dessoff Choirs
P.O. Box 1337
New York, NY 10028

All donations are fully tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.
Next Season

*Join us next season as we return to the Stage with live performances!*

**Considering Matthew Shepard – New York Premiere**

**Saturday November 6, 2021, 4pm**  
The New York Society for Ethical Culture Concert Hall  
2 W. 64th Street, New York, NY 10023

The Dessoff Choirs is proud to present the New York premiere of Craig Hella Johnson’s three-part fusion oratorio, *Considering Matthew Shepard*. Grappling with the brutal 1998 murder of a young gay man who has become an American icon and a symbol for hope and empowerment, this moving work weaves together musical styles that include country and western, gospel, and chant with lyrics taken from Matt Shepard’s personal journal, writings from his parents, newspaper reports, and poetic texts.

Joined by the Dessoff Orchestra, guest soloists, and the Brooklyn College Conservatory Singers, Dessoff will give a lightly staged performance under the baton of Music Director Malcolm J. Merriweather and co-directed by WQXR’s Elliott Forrest (Peabody-winning broadcaster, producer, and director) and Rod Caspers.

**MESSIAH SING**  
**Friday December 3, 2021, 7pm**  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway at 121st Street, New York, NY 10027

Join the chorus for our annual Messiah Sing.

**The Beauty of Holiness**  
**DESSOFF at the Metropolitan Museum**  
**Sunday, December 19, 2021, 3pm**  
1000 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10028

The Dessoff Choirs and Orchestra ushers in the winter solstice with Margaret Bonds’ Christmas cantata, *The Ballad of the Brown King*, along with shimmering choral works by Mary Lou Williams featuring *Black Christ of the Andes* as the centerpiece. In these works, we witness the bittersweet intersection of music, poetry, religion, and the Civil Rights movement in America. The Dessoff Choirs and Orchestra is joined by internationally recognized soloists Laquita Mitchell, Noah Stewart, and Lucia Bradford with Malcolm J. Merriweather at the podium.

**CREDO**  
**Thursday, April 28, 2022, 7:30pm**  
Location: TBD

Dessoff continues its mission to perform rarely heard choral masterpieces with the world premieres of Margaret Bonds’ *Credo* and *Simon Bore the Cross*. 