

The St. Louis Parish Concert Series presents

**[im]mortal:
reflections on time and transience**

The Polyphonists

Amy Broadbent, soprano
Sylvia Leith, mezzo-soprano
Matthew Hill, tenor
Edmund Milly, bass-baritone

**Saturday, September 25, 2021
4:00 p.m.**



Formed out of the musical void left by COVID-19, the Polyphonists are a quartet in two households: soprano Amy Broadbent and tenor Matt Hill in D.C., and mezzo-soprano Sylvia Leith and bass-baritone Edmund Milly in Baltimore. The word polyphony describes many independent voices interwoven in harmony, and that is our ethos: We are four soloists, but we come together to create music that transcends our individuality. Each Polyphonist brings a lifetime of solo and choral experience to the group, and our repertoire includes classics of the choral canon as well as little-known gems and new compositions.

For more information on the Polyphonists, visit:

<https://www.thepolyphonists.com>

Text and Translations

*Kindly hold applause until the end of each set (indicated by ***).
Please silence all electronic devices.*

La nuit froide et sombre

Orlande de Lassus (c. 1532-1594)

Night, cold and somber, covering with dark shade earth and heaven,
pours from the sky sleep, as sweet as honey, on the eyes.
Then day, following and leading men to toil, spreads its light,
and with varying colors weaves and ordains this great universe.

Absalon, fili mi

Josquin des Prez (c. 1450-1521)

O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee,
O Absalom, my son, my son!

O quam gloriosum

Tomás Luis de Victoria (c. 1548-1611)

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.

Media vita in morte sumus

Pierre de Manchicourt (1510-1564)

In the midst of life, we are in death.
Of whom may we seek for succor, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?
O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Savior,
Deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Media vita in morte sumus

Josef Rheinberger (1839-1901)

Selig sind die Toten

Rheinberger

Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from now on.
Yea, the Spirit speaks: they rest from their labors and their works follow them.

Unser Wandel ist im Himmel

Johann Ernst Bach (1722-1777)

- I. Unser Wandel ist im Himmel
- II. Chorale: Wie du mir Herr befohlen hast
- III. Vivace: Wir aber sind getrost

Our commonwealth is in heaven, and from it we await the Savior, Jesus Christ the Lord, who will glorify our lowly body, making it like his glorious body. As you, Lord, have commanded me. I have taken up my dear Savior with true faith, I have seen you in my arms. To stand before God, to enter, from this veil of tears, reborn, the hall of bliss. Let earthly things depart: blessedness is the better fate.

We have our hope and would rather be out of the body and at home with the Lord.

Voices Live Forever

Trevor Weston (b. 1967)

The voices of those we knew and loved remain with us for aye.
Though Time might dim the memory of a face it bore away.
We hear them in the mighty wind that frets the raging seas,
Or gently whispers in the grass, Or sings among the trees.
We hear them in the mighty roar or in the muted tone
of rivers singing o'er their banks, or gliding 'round a stone.
We hear them singing in the rain now coming o'er the hill.
Their merry chatter in the stream that flows beside the mill.
We hear them in varying tones of bow, and harp, and lute.
A subtle, sweet, yet potent force which charms both man and brute.
We hear their voices everywhere that's bound by sea and skies.
Their breath is in the air we breathe, their echo never dies.

Visions of Glory

Weston

I just want to do God's will. And He's allowed me to go up to the mountain. And I've looked over. And I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the promised land. And, I'm happy, tonight. I'm not worried about anything. I'm not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. (from Martin Luther King Jr.'s last speech, April 3, 1968)

PAUSE

Three American hymns

Exit

P. Sherman (dates unknown)

Death, like an overflowing stream,
Sweeps us away: our life's a dream
An empty tale, a morning flow'r.
Cut down and withered in an hour.

Our age to sev'nty years is set
How short the time, how frail the state;
And if to eighty we arrive,
We rather sigh and groan than live.

Amanda

Teach us, O Lord, how frail is man;
And kindly lengthen out our span;
Till a wise car of piety fit us to die,
and dwell with thee.

Justin Morgan (1747-1793)

Equanimity

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Edmund Milly (b. 1987)

Like flowery fields the nations stand,
Pleased with the morning light;
The flowers beneath the mower's hand
Lie withering ere 'tis night.

Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

The Evening Primrose

When once the sun sinks in the west,
And dew-drops pearl the Evening's breast;
Almost as pale as moonbeams are,
Or its companionable star,
The evening primrose opes anew
Its delicate blossoms to the dew;
And hermit-like, shunning the light,
Wastes its fair bloom upon the Night;
Who, blindfold to its fond caresses,
Knows not the beauty he possesses.
Thus it blooms on while Night is by;
When Day looks out with open eye,
'Bashed at the gaze it cannot shun,
It faints, and withers, and is gone.

Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)

To Daffodils

Fair daffodils, we weep to see you haste away so soon;
As yet the early-rising sun has not attain'd his noon.
Stay, stay until the hasting day has run but to evensong,
And, having pray'd together, we will go with you along.

Britten

We have short time to stay,
As you, we have as short a spring;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you, or anything.

We die, as your hours do, and dry away,
Like to the summer's rain,
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again.

Time

Britten

Yes he is Time,
Lusty and blithe!
Time is at his apogee!
Although you thought to see
A bearded ancient with a scythe,
No reaper he that cries "Take heed!"
Time is at his apogee!
Young and strong in his prime!
Behold the sower of the seed!

No Longer Mortal

Conrad Winslow (b. 1985)

Correction: February 20, 2016

An earlier version of this article correctly quoted Diane von Furstenberg as saying "There is a time when you realize you are no longer mortal." After the article was published, Ms. von Furstenberg confirmed she meant to say "no longer immortal." Her quotation has been revised to reflect her initial intention.

Correction: Feb 28, 2016

An article last Sunday about David Geffen correctly quoted Diane von Furstenberg as saying, "There is a maturity when you realize you are no longer mortal." After the article was published, Ms. von Furstenberg confirmed she meant to say "no longer immortal." Her quotation was revised to reflect her initial intention.

"Like men of a certain age, he is looking at his legacy and how he will be remembered," said Diane von Furstenberg, a longtime friend. There is a maturity when you realize you are no longer immortal."