



Inspire a choir
for unity



DON'T SHOOT, JUST LISTEN

**A choral concert
commemorating all those
lost to gun violence and seeking
to inspire unity and peace.**



Sandy Hook
PROMISE
sandyhookpromise.org



**URBAN
WORD
NYC**

Welcome

It is with joy that we welcome you to this third iteration of Inspire's inaugural concert. Joy may seem to be the wrong emotion in the context of this program. How can joy persist in the wake of the senseless loss that results from gun violence? Nevertheless, to us, your presence here tonight is a testament to the persistence of hope in the face of tremendous sorrow and an expression of the willingness to engage in efforts to create a brighter future. With this hope and call to action, we find joy in the opportunity to share our voices with you as we amplify the vital work of Sandy Hook Promise in this third partnership with them.

Inspire seeks to empower, inform, and enrich communities. Our hope is to foster an enduring spirit of community engagement uplifted through song; a goal that is impossible without generous supporters such as you. Thank you for becoming part of this vision.

Please join in singing when invited:

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease.
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Then when we'd first begun.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

DON'T SHOOT, JUST LISTEN

*Please silence all electronic devices and
hold applause until the program concludes.*

I. "Manufactured hand of god"

Motherless Child arr. Craig Hella Johnson (b. 1962)
Sara Couden, Brandon Hornsby-Selvin,
and Carrie Quarquesso, *soloists*

Ov'é Lass', Il Bel Viso? Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)

Sound out of the Ground James Forbes (b. 1935)
arr. Ari Messenger* (b. 1993)
Zana Thaqi, *mezzo soprano*

II. "An open letter..."

Nunc Dimittis Pawel Łukaszewski (b. 1968)

Northern Lights Ola Gjeilo (b. 1978)

III. "...we do not teach our history"

Only in Sleep Ēriks Ešenvalds (b. 1977)
Danielle Buonaiuto, *soprano*

In Remembrance Eleanor Daley (b. 1955)

There Will Be Rest Frank Ticheli (b. 1958)

IV. "Transformed at last"

Down in the River to Pray arr. Jon Pohlmann* (b. 1951)
Brandon Hornsby-Selvin, *tenor*

How Can I Keep from Singing? arr. Sarah Quartel (b. 1982)
Carrie Quarquesso, *soprano*

Amazing Grace arr. Unknown & Ryan Buchanan* (b. 1992)

*Please stand as you are able and join in singing
the verses printed on the facing page when invited.*

All are welcome to a reception following the concert.

** member of Inspire*

About the Program

There is an epidemic of gun violence in the United States. The death toll is staggering. We are so beleaguered with news of tragedy after tragedy that it can be overwhelming. We here have all experienced these events differently, yet we come together to unite our spirits in grief, in pain, and in mourning—and also in search of comfort, peace, and even hope. This program seeks to guide us—singers and listeners together—through this spectrum of emotions.

One of our goals is to recontextualize familiar music and words. As such, the diverse repertoire includes spirituals, a song of unrequited love—texts sacred and secular, ancient and modern. Each piece carries its own meaning, but we too bring our own meanings to the hearing, and, together, these pieces take on new purpose as part of a larger tapestry woven of those collective messages, interpretations, and interactions.

Interspersed throughout the program is a newly composed poem “The Point of a Gun” performed here tonight by its collaborative authors, Petra Thombs and Nathaniel Valdivesio from Urban Word NYC.

Also of note, this concert features three arrangements by members of Inspire. Two are reimaginings of old standards; the third is an arrangement of a song by the Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Senior Minister Emeritus at The Riverside Church. Rev. Forbes began writing “Sound out of the Ground” in response to the tragedy at Sandy Hook and continued to add verses in response to other incidents of gun violence. He set his poem to an original melody, and we are honored to share it in this choral arrangement.

The late Pierre Boulez said, “One should essentially see concerts as a means of communication, as animated contact between participants, be they listeners or creators.” In that spirit, we invite you to join your voices with ours for the final three verses of “Amazing Grace” in communal hope that “grace will lead us home.”

Finally, community building is one of the pillars of social justice and a core principal of Inspire’s mission. We encourage you to stay for fellowship and conversation after the concert. Members of Inspire will have cards with facts about gun violence and action steps that you can take as you go from here to become part of the solution.

Texts and Translations

Please hold applause until the program concludes.

I. "Manufactured hand of god"

Motherless Child

African-American Spiritual

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child—
a long way from home.

Sometimes I feel like I got no friends—
a long way from home.

Sometimes I feel like I'm almost home—
a long way from home.

Ov'é Lass', Il Bel Viso?

Henricus Schafften

Where, alas, is the beautiful face? Behold, it hides.

Woe is me, where is my sun?

Alas, what veil drapes itself and renders the heavens dark?

Woe is me, that I call and see it; it does not respond.

Oh, if your sails have auspicious winds,

My dearest sweet, and if you change your hair and features late,

If the Lord of Delos hides grace and valor in your beautiful bosom,

Hear my sighs and give them place to turn unjust disdain into love,

And may your pity conquer hardships.

See how I burn and how I am consumed by fire;

What better reason, what greater sign

Than I, a temple of faithful life and love!

Sound out of the Ground

James Forbes

Cain murdered and buried his brother.
No one knew Abel's blood had been shed.
Out of the ground came a mournful sound:
Abel's blood crying out in his stead.

Our precious young children of Newtown
Asked us all for this one sacrifice.
"Grieve our demise with eyes on the prize.
Save the children; our blood paid the price."

Refrain.

What is that sound coming out of the ground?
It's the blood of our fallen children.
What is their crying trying to say?
We've got to stop this senseless killing.

Young brothers died asking this question:
"Must we fall so that you can feel tall?"
When we can see we're one family,
Life will be so much better for all.

The blood in our veins should be crying
With the blood that's still crying today.
Rise above fear, speak out loud and clear!
For our children, put weapons away!

II. "An open letter..."

Nunc Dimittis

Song of Simeon

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace
According to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy
people Israel.

Northern Lights

Song of Songs 6:4-5a

Thou art beautiful, O my love,
sweet and comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army set in array.
Turn away thine eyes from me,
For they have made me flee away.

III. *"...we do not teach our history"*

In Remembrance

Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there, I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow,
I am the diamond glint on snow.
I am the sunlight-ripened grain,
I am the gentle morning rain.
And when you wake in the morning's hush,
I am the sweet uplifting rush of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry,
I am not there, I did not die.

Only in Sleep

Sara Teasdale

Only in sleep I see their faces,
Children I played with when I was a child.
Louise comes back with her brown hair braided,
Annie with ringlets warm and wild.
Only in sleep Time is forgotten—
What may have come to them, who can know?
Yet we played last night as long ago,
And the dollhouse stood at the turn of the stair.
The years had not sharpened their smooth round faces,
I met their eyes and found them mild—
Do they, too, dream of me, I wonder,
And for them am I too a child?

There Will Be Rest

Sara Teasdale

There will be rest, and sure stars shining
Over the rooftops crowned with snow.
A reign of rest, serene forgetting,
The music of stillness, holy and low.
I will make this world of my devising
Out of a dream in my lonely mind.
I shall find the crystal of peace; and above me
Stars I shall find.

IV. *"Transformed at last"*

Down in the River to Pray

Traditional

As I went down to the river to pray,
Studying about that good old way,
And who shall wear the robe and crown,
Good Lord, show me the way.

Oh, sisters...

Oh, brothers...

Oh, fathers...

Oh, mothers...

Oh, sinners...

—let's go down in the river to pray.

How Can I Keep from Singing?

Unattributed

My life flows on in endless song
above earth's lamentations,
I hear the real though far-off tune
that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear its music ringing.
It sounds an echo in my soul,
how can I keep from singing?

While though the tempest loudly roars,
I hear the truth, it liveth.
And though the darkness 'round me close,
songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm
while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth,
how can I keep from singing?

I lift my eyes, the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it,
and day by day this pathway smooths
since first I learned to love it.
The peace of love makes fresh my heart,
a fountain ever springing;
all things are mine in love and joy!
How can I keep from singing?

Please join in singing when invited.

Amazing Grace

John Newton

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
It will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Yeah, when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease,
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
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That saved a wretch like me!
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Artists

Carrie Quarquesso	Sara Couden
Kiri Van Lengen-Welty	David Orama
Laura Childers	Graham Bobby
Danielle Buonaiuto	Brandon Hornsby-Selvin
Erin Homes Smith	Nathanael Komline
Julia Knight	Nick Jones
Amber Fort Salladin	Edwin Kim
Erin Halpin	Bennett Mahler
Zana Thaqi	James Knox Sutterfield
Katya Dreyer-Oren	Josh Giles Alexander
Angela Hendryx	Ari Messenger
Nadia Bovy	Anthony Collins
Heather Gunn-Rivera	Ryan Buchanan

with Petra Thombs and Nathaniel Valdivieso

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Amber Fort Salladin, Associate Artistic Director
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Caren Rosenblatt, Digital Design
Laura Childers and Danielle Buonaiuto, Development
Susan Pohlmann, Reception Coordinator

Special Thanks

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Erica Hale	Nathaniel Valdivieso
Angela James	Mieke Weggeman
Ari Messenger	St Paul's Church Vestry
Dorothy Michaels	St Pauls' Hospitality Committee
Tiana Moore	

and to our donors

Petra Thombs is the Executive Director of the Ramapough Lenape Community Center in Mahwah, New Jersey where she is an advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples and nations. A graduate from Union Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity, having majored in Church History, her focus is largely addressing the Doctrine of Discovery as it has fostered racism and extreme marginalization for Indigenous communities globally.

Prior to coming to Union, Petra retired from her career in the NYC Dept of Education. A lifelong poet, she writes about historical, cultural, religious and personal experiences, expressing the perspectives of marginalized communities. Petra is married to Bernard, has two adult sons, Benjamin and Matthew and a cat named Esteban.

Nathaniel Valdivieso is a poet and performer with Urban Word NYC. He has shared his work on theatre stages such as the Apollo and Vineyard in New York City, and has been featured at the Rebel Verses Festival. Nathaniel is a sophomore at Workspace Education in CT, where he is extremely active in the school community.

Inspire: A Choir for Unity is a New York City-based chamber choir dedicated to cultivating compassion and action for diverse social issues through the power of song. In partnership with organizations seeking positive social change, we encourage individual and collective action on socially pressing issues. We seek to inspire a spirit of unity among our artists, audiences, and wider community.

Sandy Hook Promise is a national non-profit organization founded and led by several family members whose loved ones were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012. Based in Newtown, Connecticut, their intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning their tragedy into a moment of transformation by providing programs and practices that protect children and prevent the senseless, tragic loss of life.
www.sandyhookpromise.org.

Urban Word NYC champions the voices of New York City youth by providing platforms for critical literacy, youth development and leadership through free and uncensored writing. Founded in 1999, Urban Word NYC is one of oldest and most comprehensive youth literary arts organizations in the United States, raising the voices of over 25,000 teenagers annually across the five boroughs of New York City.
www.urbanwordnyc.org



Upcoming Concert:

Sing for Joy and Liberation
Friday, November 15, at 7:30PM

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Visit our website and join our mailing list to stay updated!
www.choirforunity.org