

# Chorus Polaris

with

tenor James Ahrens, baritone Elwyn Fraser, & The Laura Caviani Trio

presents

Dave Brubeck's

# THE GATES OF JUSTICE

Sunday, March 17, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church  
511 Groveland Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403

William H. Mathis, Artistic Director



# An Evening of Choral Jazz

*featuring the music of*

**Laura Caviani**

and

**Dave Brubeck**

**Chorus Polaris • The Laura Caviani Trio  
James Ahrens, tenor • Elwyn Fraser, baritone**

**William H. Mathis, conducting**

|                                                          |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>We the People</i> (from <i>The Agitators</i> )        | Laura Caviani |
| <i>We All Do Better</i> (composed for tonight's concert) | Laura Caviani |
| <i>Forty Days</i>                                        | Dave Brubeck  |
| <i>The Gates of Justice</i>                              | Dave Brubeck  |

# # #

## Listening Notes

Henry David Thoreau once said, “When I hear music, I fear no danger. I am invulnerable; I see no foe. I am related to the earliest times, and to the latest.” No work comes closer to fulfilling this statement than Dave Brubeck’s *The Gates of Justice*, a jazz-tinged cantata that combines wisdom from the Torah with speeches by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the writings of Hillel (a Jewish writer born in Babylon in 110 B.C.E.), all put together by Dave’s wife, Iola.

Written in the late 1960s at the end of the civil rights movement, *The Gates of Justice* was Brubeck’s musical attempt to bring together (and back together) the Jewish and Black American communities. In a time of national polarization over the Vietnam War and the fight for equal rights for all Americans, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the College Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati invited Brubeck to compose a piece that would awaken the spiritual connections between the two communities. According to the composer, “They were both enslaved, uprooted from their homelands and wandered in the Diaspora.” Brubeck also noted that the historical narratives of both peoples have many parallels. Thoreau would be pleased to know that Brubeck masterfully combined elements from the “earliest and latest” times to create this powerful composition.

The original recording was done in Princeton with the Dave Brubeck trio, the Westminster Choir (including tonight’s conductor), and the Cincinnati Symphony Brass, conducted by Erich Kunzel.

This is not a “Jewish” work, nor an African-American work, but its message is undoubtedly a shared value: the brotherhood of humanity. Brubeck took his internationally renowned jazz trio and fused it with two representative voices (a cantor and a gospel baritone). With chorus, a brass & percussion orchestra, and jazz trio, it often borders on the operatic. The universal message of fellowship will inspire all people, regardless of age.

A striking example of how Brubeck incorporates ancient and modern elements can be found in the seventh movement “*Shout Unto the Lord*,” which uses verses from the Psalms, the prophet Isaiah, Hillel, and quotes from Dr. King. To illustrate the connections between the black and Jewish communities in the civil rights movement, Brubeck juxtaposes the most famous section of King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, “Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we’re free at last!” with Hillel’s proverb, “If the time for action is not now, when is it?” The tenth movement, “*The Lord is Good*,” references popular songs from the 1960s, such as Simon and Garfunkel’s “*The Sound of Silence*” and music from The Beatles. Jazz interludes showcase the Brubeck sound.

All in all, *The Gates of Justice* is of profound and timely significance. The work of seeking justice for all goes on, as it has for centuries. May our individual commitment to being Justice’s hands and feet in the world be revitalized through our presence tonight!

# # #

# *The Gates of Justice*

(The text is adapted from the Hebrew Bible, The Union Prayer Book of Reform Judaism, the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the writings of Hillel, with original texts by Iola Brubeck.)

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## **I. Lord, the Heavens Cannot Contain Thee**

*I Kings 8: 27-30, 41-43 (Solomon at the dedication of the Temple)*

O Lord! The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; How much less this house that I have builded! Yet have Thou respect unto the prayer of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel when they shall pray toward this place. Yea, hear, and when Thou hearest, forgive. Moreover, concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel; When he shall pray toward this house, hear Thou, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee, that all the peoples of the earth may know Thy name.

## **II. Oh, Come Let Us Sing**

*from Psalms 95-98*

Oh, come let us sing unto the Lord; Let us raise our voice in joy to the Rock of our salvation.  
Sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing unto the Lord. Bless his name. Proclaim His salvation day to day.  
Honor and majesty are before Him. Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.  
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Tremble before Him all the earth.  
He hath remembered His mercy and faithfulness toward the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.  
The Lord our God is holy.

## **III. Open the Gates**

*Psalms 118: 19, 22-23; Isaiah 62: 10, 57: 14; 58:6-7, 9-12*

Open the gates; throw wide the gates. Open to me the gates of justice. I will enter them and give thanks to the Lord. I will give thanks to Thee, for Thou hast answered me and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and is marvelous to behold.

Go through the gates; clear ye the way for the people. Make way! Cast up the highway. Gather out the stones, clear the way! Take up the stumbling block out of the way of the people.

Is not this the fast that I have chosen to loose the fetters of wickedness; to undo the bands of the yoke; and to let the oppressed go free?

And when ye break every yoke, is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry? Open doors to bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked, thou shalt cover him. Then thou shalt call, and the Lord will answer: "Here I am!"

Out of the way of the people! They shall build the old waste places. Thou shalt raise up the foundation. Many generations, out of the way of the people.

Thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. When will you open the gates?

#### **IV. Except the Lord Build the House**

*Psalm 127: 1*

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

#### **V. Lord, Lord**

*Iola Brubeck; 1 Kings: 8; Psalm 127*

Lord, Lord, what will tomorrow bring? Today I felt an arrow stinging in a wound so deep, my eyes refuse to weep.

Lord, how can I face this day? Each dawn I walk the city's silence with a sense of peace. They speak! Black! White! Jew! There is no peace. What will tomorrow bring?

Lord, when will the ill wind change? We're all just little children crying in a world of hate for love – and still we wait.

Oh Lord! The heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee. How much less this house that I have builded. Yet have Thou respect unto the prayers of Thy servant, of Thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place. Yea, hear, and when Thou hearest, forgive.

#### **VI. Ye Shall Be Holy**

*Leviticus 19: 2, 18, 34*

Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear any grudge against the children of Thy people. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. If a stranger dwell with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong, and thou shalt love him as thyself. For ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

## VII. Shout unto the Lord

*Psalm 98; Isaiah 2: 4; 50: 8; 57: 19; Martin Luther King, Jr.; Hillel*

Come, let us shout unto the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.  
Sing to the Lord and shout for joy!

Let us sound the horn and the trumpet!

With the sound of the trumpet, the sound of the cymbal, we praise His name.

Let us praise Him with dance and the sound of the timbrel and harp.

Let the seas roar with joy and floods clap their hands.

Praise the Lord with the drum, with the harp, with the horn. Make a loud noise!

Thou hast kept us in life. Thou hast not let our footstep stray. Thou hast watched over us in the night of oppression. Thy mercy sustains us in the hour of trial.

Now we live in a land of freedom. Let us continue to be faithful to Thee. May thy law rule the life of our children, and Thy truth unite our hearts.

We must stand for freedom together, knowing that one day we will be free.

If we don't live together as brothers, we will die together as fools.

We are living in a land of freedom.

Free at last, I'm free at last! Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!

Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together.

Who is my adversary? Let him come near to me.

If the time for action is not now, when is it?

Peace to him that is far off; peace to him that is near. Let them beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nor learn war any more.

Make peace, not war! No more war, give us peace.

Make a loud noise. Make joyful noise! Shout!

## VIII. When I Behold Thy Heavens

*Psalm 8*

When I behold Thy heavens, the works of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast established: What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him?

Yet Thou hast made him but little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet.

O Lord, how glorious is Thy name in all the earth.

## IX. How Glorious Is Thy Name

*Psalm 8: 9*

How glorious is Thy name in all the earth!

## X. The Lord Is Good

*Psalm 133; Isaiah 60: 18; Psalms 100: 3-5; 91: 4; quotations from various folk tunes and songs*

Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, desolation nor destruction within thy borders. But thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. And the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

It is He that hath made us and we are His, His people and the flock of His pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving. Enter into His courts with praise! Give thanks and bless His name, for the Lord is good. His mercy endureth forever, and His faithfulness unto all of his beautiful people.

His people are faithful. Hurrah! Unto all of them, all the lonely people. Where do they all come from? It's the sound of silence. How beautiful his people are!

Go through the gates of justice. Then God's will shall be done. All people are created by the same God; We are one – one God, one world.

And the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land. For the Lord is good. He will cover thee with His pinions, and under His wings He will give you refuge. Refuge for all when we are one, all generations, when we are one!

## XI. His Truth Is a Shield

*Martin Luther King, Jr.; Psalm 91: 4*

There are knives and there are other arms. You have called on all of us to put them away, to bear instead the weapon of nonviolence, the breast-plate of righteousness, the armor of truth. His truth is a shield and a buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flieth by day.

## XII. Oh, Come Let Us Sing

*Psalm 95*

Oh, come let us sing a new song to the Lord.

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# Chorus Polaris: The Final Concert

(of the 23-24 season!)

## *Finding Home: Broadway Songs of Longing and Belonging*

3:00 p.m., Sunday

May 19, 2024

First Lutheran Church, Columbia Heights

Tickets go on sale in early April.

Watch our website and social media for updates!

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## Biographies

**Laura Caviani** has performed and recorded for over 15 years. As a sideman, she has recorded and toured with 2002 Grammy nominee Karrin Allyson (Concord Records). She has also shared the stage with other greats as Toots Theilemans, Bob Mintzer, and Dave Liebman. Locally, she has recorded with numerous musicians, including Pete Whitman's Quintet and Xtet, and the jazz orchestra JazzMN, all on the Artegra label. Additionally, she has recorded with Twin Cities jazz vocal greats: Lucia Newell, Prudence Johnson, and Voice Trek.

As a composer, her commissions include numerous works for jazz ensembles and smaller jazz combos (some of which are currently available through [Increase Music](#) and Really Good Music) as well as orchestral works for both the Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra and the Kansas City Symphony Orchestra.

She has taught at a number of schools, including St. John's University, the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, The University of St. Thomas, and many middle schools in Minneapolis through the "Harman How to Listen Program", an outreach program co-founded by Wynton Marsalis. Currently, she is on faculty at both Carleton College and St. Olaf College, both located in Northfield, MN.

Find her at: <https://lauracaviani.com>

**James Ahrens** sings with several theater and choral companies; his repertoire ranges from the Bach passions to Gilbert and Sullivan.

**Elwyn Alexander Fraser, Jr.** is a composer and singer who lends his skills to corporate events, and organizations like the Sounds of Blackness and the Minnesota Chorale.

Find him at: <https://www.energyandartistry.com>

**Chorus Polaris** is a premier community choral ensemble based in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, United States. In the "land of 10,000 choirs," Chorus Polaris is an auditioned, adult community concert choir comprised of professional, semi-professional, and talented amateur singers. The 50-voice choir presents music spanning nearly a thousand years – from the Renaissance to jazz, to classic and modern choral masterworks complete with orchestra.

Find them at: <https://choruspolaris.org/>

**William H. (Bill) Mathis** is a graduate of Westminster Choir College. He has served churches and colleges in the Midwest, New Jersey, California, and Oklahoma.

Bill is an active clinician, leading workshops or guest conducting in 35 states, including national events for the American Choral Directors Association, Choristers Guild, the American Guild of Organists, and teaching conferences. He has served on state boards of ACDA in California, Oklahoma, and Minnesota. His compositions are found in the catalogues of 15 music publishers. He is married to Carolynne Mathis, also a recently retired church musician. They have six children.

# CHORUS POLARIS

William Mathis, Artistic Director  
Tim O'Grady, collaborative pianist

## SOPRANO

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Jennifer Broden  
Mary Busch  
Kristi Castillero  
Carolyn Caswell  
Cece Cope  
Julie Crawford  
Janine Emerick \*  
Becky Flory  
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Esther Hope  
Kristen Husby  
Cheryl Joseph  
Bobbie Keller  
Linda Ribbach  
Elizabeth Richter  
Christine Sanderson  
Delores Schmidt  
Suzy Schultz

## ALTO

Laura Coale \*  
Gail Gordon  
Andrea Kircher  
Carol Lacey  
Grace Maunula  
Robin McCormack  
Ije Omeoga  
Nancy Petersen  
Alice Ressler  
Barb Ruble  
Carol Stoops  
Diane Thornton  
Jill Wilhelmi

## TENOR

Alex Asp  
Ralph Jacobson  
Fred Jensen  
Brett Johnson  
Keith Liuzzi \*  
Warren Moe  
Bill O'Brien  
Frank Petersen  
Ben Polach \*  
Jeff Saarela

## BASS

Shawn Connor  
Steven Hodulik \*  
Josh Hunt  
Andy Kroll  
Jon Lahann \*  
Nick Lewis  
Jaakob Maunula  
Ryan Natrass  
Dick Reiersen  
Paul Schultz  
Bill Van Schyndel  
Brian Tamminen  
Zachary Tamminen

\* Section Leader

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## LAURA CAVIANI TRIO

Laura Caviani, piano  
Dave Schmalenberger, drums  
Reed Mathis, bass

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## SOLOISTS

James Ahrens, tenor  
Elwyn Fraser, baritone

## ORCHESTRA

### HORN

Tim Bradley \*\*  
Chuck Hodgson  
Mike Alexander  
Jenna McBride-Harris

### TRUMPET

Josh Cameron \*\*  
Allison Hall \*\*  
Jeff Katz

### TROMBONE

Alex Wolff \*  
John Tranter  
Josh Becker

### TUBA

Nick Adragna \*\*

### ORGAN

Amy Engel

### PERCUSSION

Reid Kennedy  
Erik Schee

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*to engage, connect, and strengthen communities through collaboration and educational outreach*

**Chorus Polaris** is a premier community choral ensemble based in the Twin Cities of Minnesota, United States. In the “land of 10,000 choirs,” Chorus Polaris is an auditioned, adult community concert choir comprised of professional, semi-professional, and talented amateur singers. The 50-voice choir presents music spanning nearly a thousand years – from the Renaissance to jazz, to classic and modern choral masterworks complete with orchestra.

**Chorus Polaris** connects and engages with other community and professional artists to present programs of musical excellence for our audiences to enjoy.

**Chorus Polaris** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and is governed by a volunteer board of directors.

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