



DAVID L. WALTERS
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Susie Francis Dempsey Choral Series

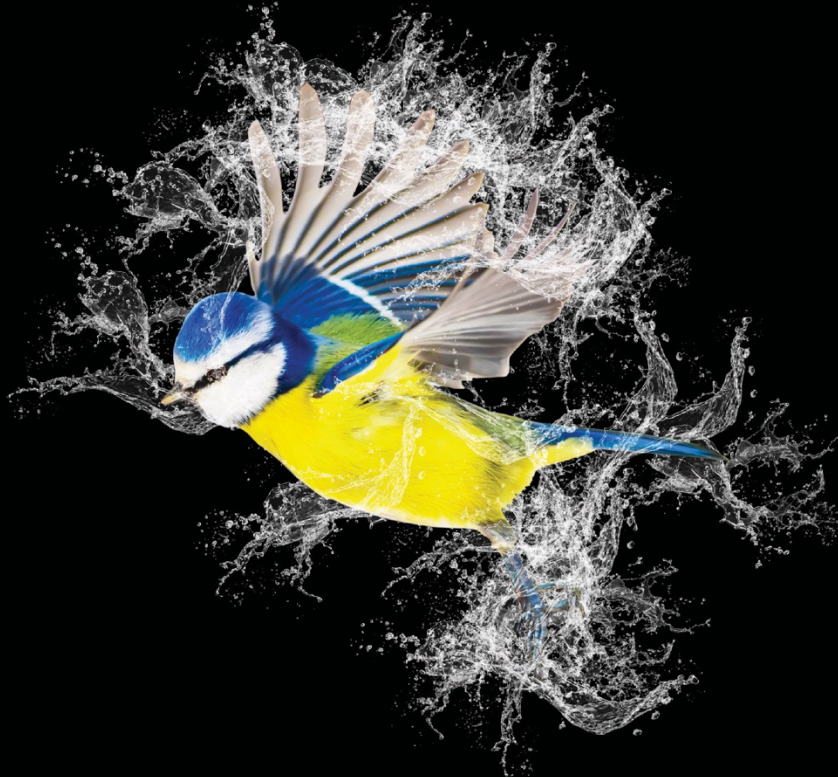
Requiem for the Living

by Dan Forrest

**A Cappella Choir, Civic Chorale, and Collegiate Choir
with Chamber Orchestra**

Eliezer Yanson Jr., conductor

April 17, 2026 | 7:30 PM | Oxford Performing Arts Center



Program Notes

A Requiem, at its core, is a prayer for rest – traditionally, for the deceased. The five movements of Dan Forrest’s *Requiem for the Living*, (2013), however, form a narrative just as much for the living, and their own struggle with pain and sorrow, as for the dead. The opening movement sets the traditional “Introit” and “Kyrie” texts – pleas of rest and mercy – using ever-increasing elaborations on a simple three-note descending motive. The second movement, instead of the traditional “Dies Irae,” sets Scriptural texts that speak of the turmoil and sorrow which face humanity, while yet invoking musical and textual allusions with long, floating melodic lines, including quotes of the “Kyrie” from the first movement. The “Agnus Dei” is performed next (a departure from the usual liturgical order) as a plea for deliverance and peace; the “Sanctus,” following it, becomes a response to this redemption. The “Sanctus” offers three different glimpses of the “heavens and earth, full of Thy glory,” all of which develop the same musical motive: an ethereal opening section inspired by images of space from the Hubble Space Telescope, a stirring middle section inspired by images of our own planet as viewed from the International Space Station, and a closing section which brings the listener down to Earth, where cities teem with the energy of humanity. The “Lux aeterna” which then closes the work portrays light, peace, and rest – for both the deceased and the living.

Requiem for the Living was commissioned by the Hickory Choral Society (Hickory, NC), as part of their ongoing commitment to funding new major works for the choral repertoire. It is one of Dan Forrest’s major works and was written over a period of 10 months in 2012.

I

A Cappella Choir
Eliezer Yanson Jr., director

Alleluia Elaine Hagenberg
(b. 1979)

Precious Lord Thomas Dorsey
(1899 – 1993)
arr. Arnold Sevier

Unclouded Day J.K. Alwood
(1828 – 1909)
arr. Shawn Kirchner

INTERMISSION (7 minutes)

II

**Requiem for the Living Dan Forrest
(b. 1978)**

Introit – Kyrie

*Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
Hear my prayer, for unto Thee all flesh shall come.
Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy;
Lord have mercy.*

Vanitas vanitatum

*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!
(from Ecclesiastes)
Merciful Lord Jesus, grant them rest.
Full of tears,
(from the Dies Irae)
He said, Let the day perish wherein I was born.
(from Job 3:2-3)*

Agnus Dei

Adria Hamilton, mezzo-soprano
Carley Brooks, soprano

*Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us; grant them rest.*
*Lamb of God,
who takes away the sins of the world,
grant us peace; have mercy on us; grant them rest.*

Sanctus

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.
Hosanna in the highest!*

Lux aeterna

Ashlyn Endicott, soprano
Ben Barnwell, tenor

*May light eternal shine upon them, O Lord,
in the company of Thy saints forever:
for Thou art merciful.
Let perpetual light shine on them.*

*Come unto me,
all ye who labor and are heavy laden,
and I will give you rest.
(Matthew 28:19)*

*Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
Grant us peace.*

PERSONNEL

JSU COMBINED CHOIRS

A CAPPELLA CHOIR

Eliezer Yanson, *director*; Rachel Park, *collaborative pianist*

Soprano I: Carley Brooks, Ashlyn Endicott, Elizabeth Embrey, Shealee Griffith, Tierra-Mishael Harmon **Soprano II:** Meredith Barnes, Brie Dinkins, Maleah Hallmark, Seagan Majchrzak, Caroline Rogers **Alto I:** Julia Cuevas, Lauren Kilgore, Kimora Linder, Mary Elizabeth Maddox, Ramsey Whitney **Alto II:** Kari Gardner, Bethany Hallmark, Adria Hamilton, Adyson Lowden **Tenor I:** Levi Benefield, Joelton Cox, Jalon Millhollan, Ethan Nessler **Tenor II:** Braden Acheson, Will Kelley, Mason Holbrook, Hayden Medley, Devonte Roszell, **Bass I:** Mitchell Coleman Jeremiah Davidson, Ethan Duce, Joshua Edge, Christian Parker **Bass II:** Jonathan Crawford, Alex Frost, Jamey Smith, Silas Tankersley

CIVIC CHORALE

Eliezer Yanson, *director*; Allyson West, *collaborative pianist*

Soprano: Blue Adams, Heidi Dempsey, Susie Dempsey, Debbie Eyre, Pat Strickland, Sandra Triplett, Jennie Wall, Emily Williams, Martha Yanson **Alto:** Nancy Byars, Gwen Giles, Elaine Heath Greenwalt, Bonnie Jones, Alexa Lusk, Dorothy McKay, Kim Merrell, Linda Olsavsky, Anna Smith, Leela Smith, Sophia Tankersley, Cheryl Wight **Tenor:** Ben Barnwell, Kevin Geeter, Richard Guzman, Ethan Nessler, Richard Phelps, Phillip Powell, Donald Turner **Bass:** David Dempsey, Todd Dissinger, Christopher Douglas, Elijah Tankersley, Silas Tankersley, Nathan Wight

COLLEGIATE CHOIR

Susan McCall, *director*; Sharon Reynolds, *collaborative pianist*

Soprano: Addison Jenkins, Karissa Moses, Artemis Nguyen, Breannah Smith, Brielle Yingling **Alto:** Raine Hollingsworth, Samantha Keith, Tairyn Martell, Ailyn Rodriguez, Leela Smith, Keelie Williams **Tenor:** Mason Holmes, Shea Mize **Bass:** Jefferson Couch, Aaron Hill

CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Violin I: Kristin Campbell*, Annesley Streets, Alayna Endicott **Violin II:** Michelle Lessard, Ruthie Nguyen, David Bonner **Viola:** Meredith Treaster, Ben Davis **Cello:** Bryce Anderson, Keith LaBenne **Flute:** Sarah Dunbar-Moon **Oboe:** Kelly Newport **Horn:** Jeff Solomon **Timpani:** Britton Cochran **Percussion:** Logan Clark **Harp:** Katie Hoppe-McQueen **Organ:** Matt McMahan

*concertmaster

About the Conductor

Eliezer Yanson Jr. is professor of music and director of choral activities at Jacksonville State University in Jacksonville, Alabama where he conducts the A Cappella Choir and Civic Chorale and teaches undergraduate and graduate music classes. Prior to his appointment at Jax State, Eliezer served on the music faculty at Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. He earned a doctor of musical arts degree in choral conducting from the University of South Carolina, a master of music in church music (conducting) and a bachelor of music in piano performance from Bob Jones University. His primary conducting mentors are Larry Wyatt and Warren Cook. Eliezer has also worked and studied with Hilary Apfelstadt, Don Portnoy, Dian Tchobanov, André Thomas, and Paul Vermel.

An active adjudicator, conference speaker, and clinician, Eliezer has conducted choirs and presented at conferences in the United States, Belgium, Bulgaria, South Korea, Thailand, Türkiye, and his native Philippines. He is a two-time 3rd prize winner (2015 and 2023) of The American Prize in Conducting: College/University Chorus Division and has appeared in Carnegie Hall as conductor three times. Additionally, Eliezer serves as interim music minister at Southside Baptist Church in Southside, Alabama. While passionate about conducting and teaching, Eliezer's greatest role is being husband to Martha and father to Isabella and Andre.

About the Organist

Matthew McMahan has served as organist/minister of music and Fine Arts at Decatur Presbyterian Church, Decatur, Georgia since 1997. Prior to this appointment, he held similar positions in Philadelphia, Birmingham and Canton Ohio. A native of Oxford, Alabama, and a graduate of Oxford High School, Matt received undergraduate performance degrees (piano and organ) from Jacksonville State University and holds graduate degrees (organ performance and church music) from Westminster Choir College in Princeton, New Jersey. He studied piano with Ronald and Ann Surace, and his mother, Bobbie Bennett McMahan; organ with Louis Culver, Jim Fairleigh and Joan Lippincott; conducting with Bayne Dobbins, Allen Crowell, Frauke Hassemann and Joseph Flummerfelt. Extended studies were with pianist, Dalton Baldwin, and organist, Jean Langlais.

While in graduate school, Matt was selected by the Westminster Choir College organ faculty to give a solo organ recital broadcast on WQXR-New York Times Classical Radio Station's "Young Artists Showcase". He has been presented in recital in the United States, Canada, Austria, France, Switzerland and Holland. Matt and his wife, Lori (who serves alongside Matt

on staff at Decatur Presbyterian Church, as director of children’s music ministry), live in Lilburn, Georgia, and have two grown sons, Drew and Wesley.

About the Choirs

The **A CAPPELLA CHOIR** is Jacksonville State University’s flagship choral ensemble performing a wide variety of standard choral literature from various musical periods, world music, folk music, spirituals, and contemporary works. Founded in 1960, the A Cappella Choir is an auditioned ensemble from diverse academic disciplines and has a long-standing reputation as a respected chorus, with performances at prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall and Spivey Hall. Recently, the A Cappella Choir competed in the CantaRode International Choral Festival in the Netherlands and placed fourth out of ten choirs invited to perform from a pool of 22 auditioned ensembles. The choir was also named a national finalist in the choral performance category – college/university division (smaller program) of *The American Prize*, the nation’s most comprehensive series of contests in the performing arts.

The **CIVIC CHORALE** serves as an avenue for members of the community to gather and make music at a high level in preparation for public concerts or performances for the Calhoun County community and beyond. Inclusive of members of the local community as well as JSU students, faculty, and staff, the ensemble performs masterworks from the Baroque to the present.

The **COLLEGIATE CHOIR** is open to any Jacksonville State University student who enjoys singing—no audition required. It offers a welcoming community and an outlet for self-expression, learning, and personal growth, all while being part of something meaningful. The choir performs two campus concerts each semester and also shares music with nearby schools.



Support the choral ensembles at Jacksonville State University. All donations are tax deductible. Scan the QR code or mail checks (payable to JSU Choirs) to JSU Foundation, 700 Pelham Rd N., Jacksonville State University, Jacksonville, AL 36265