

**IPC CHOIR
SPRING CONCERT**

Frostiana

MAY 19, 2024 | 4 PM

**DR. JEFF McLELLAND
CONDUCTOR & CHOIRMASTER**

THE IPC CHOIR & ORCHESTRA

**THE REV. KEVIN J. LONG, PASTOR
INDEPENDENT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA**



Quartet, No. 1 in D minor..... Randall Thompson
I. Allegro moderato (1899-1984)
II. Lento e tristo
III. Vivace ma non troppo
IV. Allegro appassionato

Frostiana

(The lyrics can be found on the next page)

- I. "The Road Not Taken"
- II. "The Pasture"
- III. "Come In"
- IV. "The Telephone"
- V. "A Girl's Garden"
- VI. "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening"
- VII. "Choose Something Like a Star"

*This choral work has been dedicated to the glory of God and in honor of
Linda Nelson's 80th birthday.
It is sung for the first time at IPC today.*

I. "The Road Not Taken" (1915)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

II. "The Pasture" (1914)

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I
may):
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so
young,
It totters when she licks it with her
tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long.—You come too.

III. "Come In" (1941)

As I came to the edge of the woods,
Thrush music — hark!
Now if it was dusk outside,
Inside it was dark.

Too dark in the woods for a bird
By sleight of wing
To better its perch for the night,
Though it still could sing.

The last of the light of the sun
That had died in the west
Still lived for one song more
In a thrush's breast.

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went —
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament.

But no, I was out for stars;
I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked;
And I hadn't been.

IV. "The Telephone" (1916)

"When I was just as far as I could walk
From here to-day,
There was an hour
All still
When leaning with my head against a flower
I heard you talk.
Don't say I didn't, for I heard you say—
You spoke from that flower on the window sill—
Do you remember what it was you said?"

"First tell me what it was you thought you heard."

"Having found the flower and driven a bee away,
I leaned my head,
And holding by the stalk,
I listened and I thought I caught the word—
What was it? Did you call me by my name?
Or did you say—
Someone said 'Come'—I heard it as I bowed."

"I may have thought as much, but not aloud."

"Well, so I came."

V. "A Girl's Garden" (1916)

A neighbor of mine in the village
Likes to tell how one spring
When she was a girl on the farm, she did
A childlike thing.

One day she asked her father
To give her a garden plot
To plant and tend and reap herself,
And he said, "Why not?"

In casting about for a corner
He thought of an idle bit
Of walled-off ground where a shop had stood,
And he said, "Just it."

And he said, "That ought to make you
An ideal one-girl farm,
And give you a chance to put some strength
On your slim-jim arm."

It was not enough of a garden,
Her father said, to plough;
So she had to work it all by hand,
But she don't mind now.

She wheeled the dung in the wheelbarrow
Along a stretch of road;
But she always ran away and left
Her not-nice load.

And hid from anyone passing.
And then she begged the seed.
She says she thinks she planted one
Of all things but weed.

A hill each of potatoes,
Radishes, lettuce, peas,
Tomatoes, beets, beans, pumpkins, corn,
And even fruit trees

And yes, she has long mistrusted
That a cider apple tree
In bearing there to-day is hers,
Or at least may be.

Her crop was a miscellany
When all was said and done,
A little bit of everything,
A great deal of none.

Now when she sees in the village
How village things go,
Just when it seems to come in right,
She says, "I know!"

It's as when I was a farmer——"
Oh, never by way of advice!
And she never sins by telling the tale
To the same person twice.

VI. "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening"
(1923)

Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village, though.
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near,
Between the woods and frozen lake,
The coldest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

VII. "Choose Something Like a Star" (1943)

O Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud –
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says "I burn."
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremite,*
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Music Notes

RANDALL THOMPSON (1899-1984) was born in New York City and educated at Harvard University and the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. He taught at Wellesley College, the University of California Berkeley, Princeton University, the Curtis Institute of Music (serving as its Director 1941/1942), the University of Virginia, and Harvard University. Among his many students at Harvard and Curtis were Leonard Bernstein and Samuel Adler. While he wrote in most genres, he was best known for his choral works. His style is conservative and Neoclassical, combining traditional forms with 20th-century styles and continues to be widely performed and admired today for beauty, complexity, and accessibility.

Thompson's **FIRST STRING QUARTET, NO. 1, IN D MINOR**, dates from 1941 and was the result of a commission from Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, perhaps the most important sponsor of chamber music compositions in the first half of the 20th century. Thompson commented that Beethoven's Rasumovsky Quartets served as his model, though not, of course, tonally. The opening movement, *Allegro moderato*, begins with an urgent, driving rhythmic theme. One can hear brief references to American fiddle tunes. A more lyrical second theme provides fine contrast. The broad second movement, *Lento e tristo*, begins with the cello presenting a heartfelt melody. Then comes a scherzo, *Vivace ma non troppo*, in which Thompson employs several meters, changes of dynamics, and articulation to achieve a 20th-century, very American-sounding version of what Beethoven managed in the scherzo of his String Quartet No. 7 in F Major, Op. 59, No. 1. A *meno mosso* section interrupts the scherzo twice. The finale, *Allegro appassionato*, begins with a downward moving, organ-like introduction before the lyrical main subject makes its appearance. With a passionate theme, full of pathos, the quartet finds its way to a peaceful resolution as it ends.

FROSTIANA was commissioned by the town of Amherst, Massachusetts, to celebrate its upcoming bicentennial in 1959. The town was known for its association with Robert Frost who had lived there for several years. Frost had known Thompson for some time and admired his music. Accordingly, it was decided that the commemorative work would be a setting of some of Frost's poetry. The town suggested "The Gift Outright." Thompson, however, asked to be allowed to choose his own texts. "Good texts for choral compositions must be based on universality of appeal," he once remarked. Ultimately, he decided on seven Frost poem with which he constructed a seven-movement suite of choral art songs.

Since the 70-odd member choir was comprised of various local choirs who rehearsed separately, Thompson structured the work so that the mixed voices sang together in only three of the seven movements. Each of the other four was scored for male voices or female voices alone.

The piece premiered in the Amherst Regional High School auditorium on August 18, 1959, with the composer conducting. Frost attended, and it is well-known that the poet called out from the audience asking that the last number be repeated. In a review afterward, Frost remarked, "It was splended. I didn't think he [Thompson] could do it. It was very difficult to bring poetry to music."

Since its premiere, *Frostiana* has been recorded and performed with some frequency. One noteworthy performance includes January 31, 1963, when G. Wallace Woodworth played "The Road Not Taken" on the organ for Robert Frost's memorial service. It was also performed in April 1984 for a special event honoring Thompson in Cambridge, Massachusetts, shortly before his death.

When we contemplate the endurance of music written in years past, Thompson's own words from a 1950 interview come to mind: "We don't lose in quality by writing clearly and simply. We gain. Simplicity is for me a foremost principle in art." None of his works embody this dictum more than *Frostiana*.

excerpted and condensed from various sources including an essay by Carl B. Schmidt in July 2014

The Independent Presbyterian Church Choir



Dr. Jeff R. McLelland, Conductor & Choirmaster

SOPRANO

Rachel Hancock
Leah Hendrix
Kristine Hurst-Wajszczuk
Kris Lindley
Beth Middleton
Janet Ort
Mary Rose Patrick
Grace Posey
Ginni Robertson
Kate Waters

ALTO

Carter Cooper
Kelley Feagin
Debbie McCorquodale
Debbie Medenica
Sally Reilly
Karen Shadinger
Angelyn Simmons
Sally Speaker
Jane Stump
Martha Summey
Marliese Thomas
Katie Woodruff

TENOR

Asher Entrekin
Rita Gibbon
Debbie Gray
Nicholas Mathes
Kendyl Partridge
Greg Roberson

BASS

Bill Casey
Foster Cook
Lant Davis
Doc Feagin
Andrew Hicks
George E. Keller III
Bentley Patrick
Xavier Roberson
Richard Stump

✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱

Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Daniel Szasz

OBOE

James Sullivan

HORN

Adam Pandolfi

VIOLIN II

Mayumi Masri

FLUTE

Lisa Wienhold

PIANO

Ken Watson

VIOLA

Zak Enikeev

CLARINET

Brad Whitfield

CELLO

Xi Yang

BASSOON

Tariq Masri



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