Note from the artistic director:

I welcome you to the first concert of our 2017/18 season, Come Evening’s Rest. In this concert we will be exploring themes of rest, abiding, evening, night, death and eternal rest. We will share these texts and sounds with you as we acknowledge the time of day, the slowing season of the year as we turn from fall to winter and the waning liturgical calendar – nearing year’s end and Eternity Sunday. Also poignant to us, as a 62-year old choral organization, is our current season of re-visioning and renewal. As we enter into this intentional time of reflection we acknowledge a need for deep listening – which must first be preceded by sitting down and then being quiet.

Our concert begins by offering what we can and hoping that it is sufficient (Sirett) as we sit down to rest, abiding in God’s love and care (Bairstow), trusting that we will be provided for by our God of Love (Berger). We then move into texts that explore the time of evening, night and season, by noting observational and psychological experiences associated within the bounds of this common time of day, by 3 American composers. In particular, young Daniel Elder’s original text and music attempts to capture the vague and dualistic nature of our relationship to night - at times uncertain and yet bringing clarity.

Following intermission we will move into death and eternity with Tavener’s penetrating Funeral Ikos, a setting of text from the order for the burial of the dead, from the Greco-Russian orthodox tradition. Robinovitch’s setting of the 1500 year-old Hebrew Prayer Before Sleep then prepares us for Nysted’s personal and atmospheric approach to the timelessness of eternal rest in his treatment of 8 measures of Bach’s simple and joyous beckoning of eternal rest.

We will then shift our observational viewpoint back to ‘those left to grieve’ as commit our loved ones, through Willan’s setting of Longfellow and Tavener’s combination of Shakespeare and prayer, to the grave and flight of angels as they ascend beyond.

We will finish the concert with three spirituals, set to strike a posture of hopeful certainty as they profess a world to come. Parker/Shaw’s longing in I want to die easy is followed by the calm and reassurance of Tate’s Hold me, rock me. We will then finish with the enthusiastic Hallelujah’s, a sign of our enduring resolve, in Hairston’s, Lord I don’t feel noways tired.

So, I invite you to sit back, turn off your phones and rest with us – if even for a short while.

 -Brandon