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www.wisconsinchamberchoir.org

The Wisconsin Chamber Choir presents:

I Dream a World

Works by African American composers and poets

With special guests Leotha and Tamera Stanley and Friends

Saturday, April 29th, 2023, 7:30 p.m.

First Unitarian Society Atrium Auditorium

900 University Bay Drive, Madison, WI

Join the Wisconsin Chamber Choir on April 29th for "I Dream a World," a concert of works by African American composers and poets. The program will feature special guests Leotha and Tamera Stanley and Friends, a gospel ensemble based at Madison's Mt. Zion Baptist Church, known for their thrilling performances with the Madison Symphony and Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$5 for students, available in advance from www.WisconsinChamberChoir.org and at the door.

Music in a wide variety of styles awaits you, including classical, jazz, gospel, and popular music. Highlights include Joel Thompson's impassioned *Hold Fast to Dreams*, which juxtaposes two of Langston Hughes' most famous poems, *Harlem*, and *Dreams*. Jazz composer David N. Baker is represented by a quirky setting of *Dream Boogie*, the opening poem of Hughes' *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. A trio of works by classical/jazz crossover composer Mary Watkins references gospel and contemporary a cappella styles while delivering a cogent message about persevering in the face of adversity.

Reaching back to the Romantic era, two works by Afro-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor demonstrate the skill and emotional power that made him one of the most popular composers in the late nineteenth century on both sides of the Atlantic. Neglected for decades after his death, Coleridge Taylor's music is now experiencing a renaissance, along with that of his slightly younger American contemporary, Florence Price, represented by a tuneful *Poem of Praise*. Other composers in the WCC's lineup include Undine Smith Moore, Ulysses Kay, and Alvin Singleton, setting poems by Phillis Wheatley, Lawrence Dunbar, and Rita Dove.

The program draws its title from one of Langston Hughes' most iconic poems, *I Dream a World*, which began life as an aria in William Grant Still's 1939 opera, *Troubled Island*. The libretto, cowritten by Hughes, tells the gripping story of the Haitian revolution at the turn of the 19th century. The WCC's concert will include a rare performance of the original aria from Still's opera, along with a contemporary setting of the poem by Rosephanye Powell. Leotha and Tamera Stanley and Friends will bring the concert to a rousing and uplifting close.

Founded in 1998, the Wisconsin Chamber Choir has established a reputation for excellence in the performance of oratorios by Bach, Handel, Mozart, and Brahms; a cappella works from various centuries; and world premieres. WCC Artistic Director Robert Gehrenbeck, who serves as Director of Choral Activities at UW-Whitewater, has been hailed by critics for his vibrant and emotionally compelling interpretations of a wide variety of choral music. Under his leadership the WCC has presented major works with orchestra as well as innovative programs of rarely heard music by composers from a wide variety of eras, nationalities, and cultures.