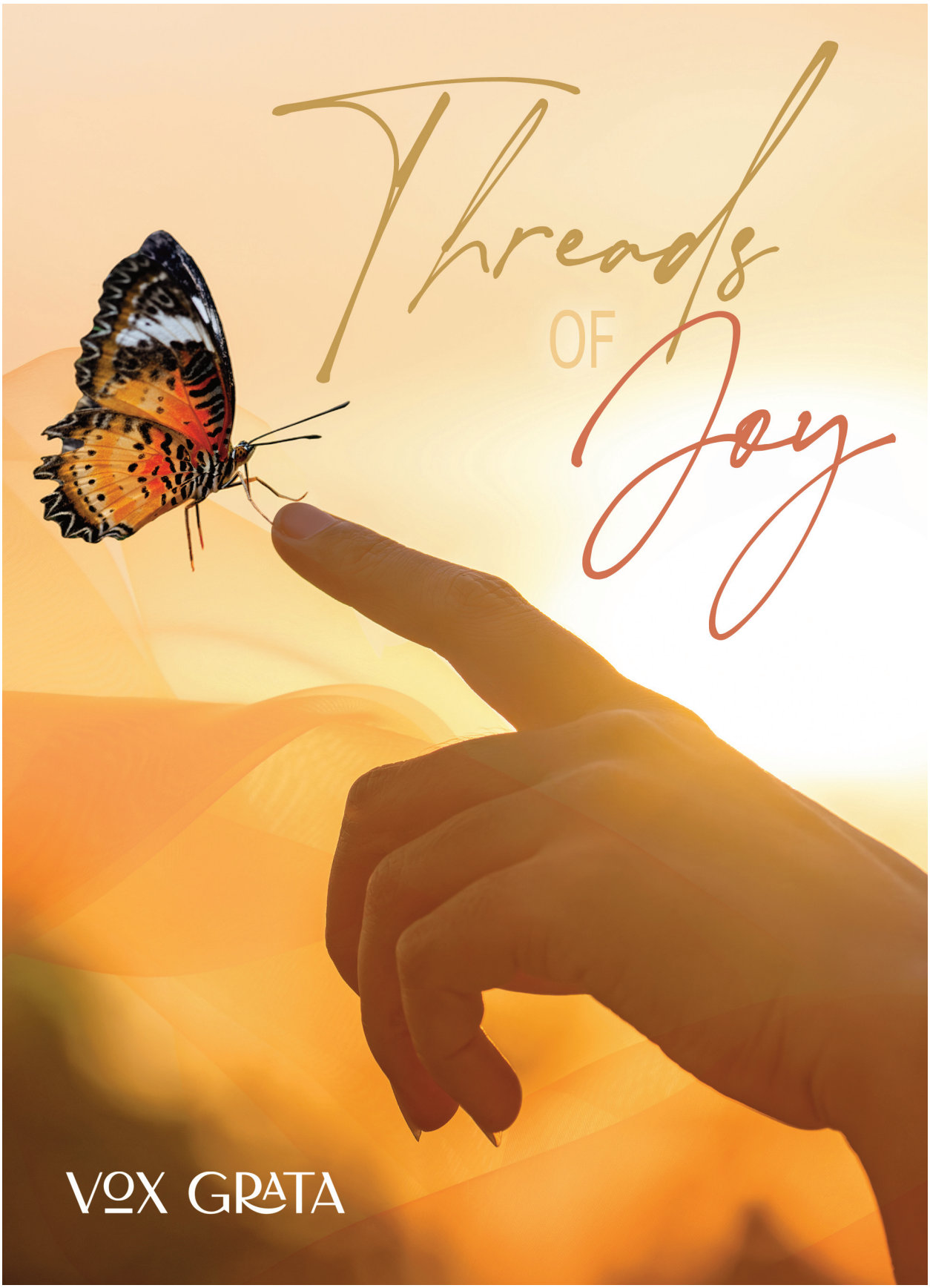

Threads
OF
Joy
VOX GRATA

VOX GRATA
WOMEN'S CHOIR

Threads of Joy

MON, NOV 9 | 7:30 PM
Second Presbyterian Church, Nashville

THU, NOV 12 | 7:30 PM
Westminster Prebyterian Church, Nashville

WHAT WILL THE WORLD BRING TODAY?

One Moment at a Time ..... Malena S.

Our journey in our life
At times gets tough,
And you may feel that
You are not enough
Remember that you
Are beautiful and perfect
As you are.
And your life was made
To shine Bright as the brightest
Shooting star.

One moment at a time,
Take things as they come,
Sometimes that can be
Easier said than done.
When you feel like giving up,
Try to keep in mind:
Stay strong and positive
And live one moment at a time.
Yeah,
When you feel like giving up,
Try to keep in mind
To stay strong and positive,
Live one moment at a time.

Does the World Say? ..... Music and Words by Kyle Pederson

Kyla Mahaffey and Joslyn Ellis, soloists

Does the world say that you don't look the right way?
Does the world say that you're just not enough?
Does the world say that this isn't the right spot?
When it wants you there but not here
and tells you all the things you are not.

I've been there, too;
It's hard to shut my ears to the noise.

I don't stand a chance if it's me in this world all alone.
The chatter is deafening, too overwhelming;
It's hard to find my way home.
So take my hand; don't let go.

Does the world say that you don't think
the right things?
Does the world say that you're not worth the time?
Does the world laugh when you fall, when you cry?
Does it turn the other way every time you walk by?

I'm growing, learning, loving, becoming.

So take my hand; don't let go.

The Valley

Words and Music by Jane Siberry
Arrangement by Beth Hanson

I live in the hills; you live in the valleys.
And all that you know are these blackbirds.
You rise every morning, wondering what in the world
will the world bring today?
Will it bring you joy, or will it take it away?
And every step you take is guided by
the love of the light on the land and
the blackbird's cry.
You will walk in good company.

The valley is dark, the burgeoning holding.
The stillness obscured by their judging.
You walk through the shadows, uncertain
and surely hurting,
deserted by the blackbirds and the staccato
of the staff.

And though you trust the light towards which
you wend your way,
sometimes you feel all that you wanted
has been taken away.
You will walk in good company.

I love the best in you; you love the best in me,
though it's not always easy.
Lovely? Lonely?
We will walk in good company.

The shepherd upright and flowing
you see.

PAYING ATTENTION

The Summer Day

Words by Mary Oliver | Music by Joan Szymko
Jane Kirchner, flute

Who made the world?
Who made the swan, and the black bear?
Who made the grasshopper?
This grasshopper, I mean –
the one who has flung herself out of the grass,
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,
who is moving her jaws back and forth instead
of up and down –
who is gazing around with her enormous and
complicated eyes.
Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly
washes her face.

Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away.
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.
I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down
into the grass, how to kneel in the grass,
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll
through the fields,
which is what I have been doing all day.
Tell me, what else should I have done?
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?
Tell me, what is it you plan to do
With your one wild and precious life?

The Caged Bird

Sarah T.

A creature of beauty once wild and free.
Her wings now clipped, and her head slightly bowed.
She sits through the passing days and waits.
Waits for when the doors to freedom will open again.
The same freedom the world says she will never
again receive,

Far from the world she once adored, her dreams
were left to die.
And right when the world expects to hear
a mountain cry,
Through the cage a song will rise -
An inspiring melody of boldness and strength.

For the world may try to kill her flesh,
But it will never be allowed to kill her spirit.
For the caged bird will sing forever
A song of triumph and a song of praise.
For she was not defeated,
She was not misled -
She was only caged.
And for that her courage remains,
For she knows the one who made her
Will forever give her strength,
And every time the world tries to take her power,
Still the caged bird has the power to sing!

Here in My Heart ..... Words and Music by Sarah Quartel

The wind off the ocean, the breeze in the trees;
the ruffle of feathers, a bird on the wing
fill my heart like they're singing.
The scent of the pine trees, the dampness of spring;
the fragrance of lilac, the memory it brings
fill my heart like they're singing.
Here, here in my heart they're singing.

The first sign of sunrise, painting the sky;
the ribbons of color warming, warming
fill my heart like they're singing.
The fresh of the morning, the dew on the grass;
the feathery petals opening, opening
fill my heart like they're singing.
Here, here in my heart they're singing.
Gleaming, joyful with voices ringing.

When my voice sings with them, their beauty lingers,
echoing on, carrying me to brighter days.
When my voice sings with them, the music blossoms,
growing strong, rooting deep, and now I know:
Here, here in my heart I'm singing.
Here, here in my heart we're singing.

SORROW AND BEAUTY CAN COEXIST

Follow the Star Back ..... Sophia W.

The leaves crunch under my feet as I trudge along
towards home. I am forced to return again.
But I must start over every time,
unable to anchor myself, to stay as I am.
This path is well-worn by these constant journeys,
as there are clear signs that I've been here before.
A bird nest sways above. Flowers bloom. Rabbits run.
Exposed tree roots wear down, tripped on in haste.
Still, each repeat I get better, learning the best
ways to navigate, even in darkness.
Soon I will find my way home, stronger than before.
I will find the light again
and this pain will be a distant memory.

Threads of Joy ..... Words by Laura Foley
Music by Dale Trumbore

I have noticed joy
how it threads below
the darkness.
Have you seen it too?
And have you heard it,
How it speaks
the unspeakable,
the bliss?
A kind of silence, a light
beneath pain.
Have you noticed?
It rises like fingers
and then – look!
it presses through.

Declaration ..... Tony C.

It is November
I am at the farm swinging
on a long abandoned board
under the hog-killing tree/

In this year
I came to be convinced
we are most often
our own best company, not
because we are in demand,
but because we owe less to others.

The safety net has been
disassembled
and shared with another/
that did not kill me

The dark mornings which force me
out of bed did not change/
but I must work
because that death which
pursues the heart
does not let go

My November Guest ..... Words by Robert Frost | Music by James Baas

Chris Stenstrom, cello

My Sorrow, when she's here with me,
Thinks these dark days of autumn rain
Are beautiful as days can be;
She loves the bare, the withered tree;
She walks the sodden pasture lane.

Her pleasure will not let me stay.
She talks and I am fain to list:
She's glad the birds are gone away.
She's glad her simple worsted gray
Is silver now with clinging mist.

The desolate, deserted trees,
The faded earth, the heavy sky,
The beauties she so truly sees,
She thinks I have no eye for these,
And vexes me for reason why.

Not yesterday I learned to know
The love of bare November days
Before the coming of the snow,
But it were vain to tell her so,
And they are better for her praise.

Resilience ..... Virginia L.

With each moment, as it comes to light,
what do you feel?
Is it the fall or the rise from it all?
For both, I feel. If I had not fallen,
I would have never felt the rise.
Of the woman I once was,
the woman I am now
and the woman I will forever rise to be.
For the inevitable resilience within me
I have found will forever be
the self-growth to persevere through
the darkest times.
For this newfound **Resilience** within
is etched upon every fiber of my being.

There shall forever be
the longing for me to learn this new me,
I learn self-growth,
As I felt the harsh reality of the fall,
it has taught me the truth of resilience,
how to rise from the jaded pieces of my life
to soar above
all that has come to pass,
all that is upon me at this moment,
and all that lay ahead of me,
to become who I am truly meant to be.
ME! The resilient woman within Me!

To Joy

Words by Sara Teasdale | Music by Daniel Kallman
Jane Kirchner, flute

Lo, I am happy, for my eyes have seen
Joy glowing here before me, face to face;
His wings were arched above me for a space,
I kissed his lips, no bitter came between.
The air is vibrant where his feet have been,
And full of song and color is his place.
His wondrous presence sheds about a grace
That lifts and hallows all that once was mean.
I may not sorrow for I saw the light,
Tho' I shall walk in valley ways for long,
I still shall hear the echo of the song, -
My life is measured by its one great height.
Joy holds more grace than pain can ever give,
And by my glimpse of joy my soul shall live.

A Word from Our Concert Beneficiary
Healing Arts Project, Inc. (HAPI)
Lynece Benton-Stewart

TOMORROW IS ALWAYS A NEW AND DIFFERENT DAY

The Mountain

Amy Louise A.

The mountain is there for a reason my friend,
Why I do not know.
Perhaps to shield you from danger unseen, or a fierce wind's blow.
Perhaps to make you stronger and look deeper into your soul,
or perhaps to whisper secrets that only the mountain knows.
Perhaps to offer you beauty, though rough and rugged it may be.
The mountain is there for a reason my friend,
just keep climbing, trusting and believe.

Standing Tall

Words and Music by Ellen Gilson Voth

I see your buds in springtime, the fruit you share in summer,
Standing tall against the sky, making a mark on the world.

I see the snow that graces you in winter,
The golden leaves you wear in fall.
You may feel bare branches weighing toward the ground,
Yet I know your strength within.

Your blossoms may fade, Your leaves may be swept away,
But your roots are strong and your beauty lives on.

We treasure you in springtime (There is no one in the world like you.)
And in the warmth of summer.
We are better people with you in the world.

Continued on next page

Standing Tall — Continued

We share the loneliness you feel in winter (Think of those you cherish)
And in the fading light of fall. (and those that cherish you.)
You touch our lives in ways you don't even know.

Tomorrow is always a new and different day.

Seasons come and seasons go,
Yet we will always see you standing tall,
Come summer, winter, spring or fall,
Making your mark,
Your beautiful mark on the world.

THREADS OF JOY

Program Notes

STANDING TALL

Standing Tall, composed by Ellen Gilson Voth was written following the unexpected passing of Alexandra Valoras (2000-2018). The music is simple and eloquent, conveying confidence in the value of life.

Near the Valoras' home stands an apple tree. Alexandra's father cherishes memories of Alexandra with the tree. In Standing Tall, the composer portrays four seasons as seen in the tree, but in the second stanza, the tree becomes a metaphor for Alexandra, with the word "you" taking the place of her name. Affirming statements for anyone struggling are layered above the central text.

We hope this piece is a reminder of the fresh start each day offers, the need for deep roots to withstand seasons of promise and struggle, and the beauty and inherent worth of every person.

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Our vision is to be a preeminent community women's choir, modeling artistic excellence and a commitment to social justice and advocacy.

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