

EMPIRE POP CHOIR PRESENTS

Space Oddity

NOV. 2ND, 7:30 PM
URBAN HIVE

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
EMPIREARTSCOLLECTIVE.COM

empire arts

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S NOTE

We're back and we're off to space! I love our theme this term because at first glance, it seems a little weird, but in reality there's such a vast amount of amazing pop music that mentions every aspect of the universe, from time-honored classics like "Fly Me to the Moon" and "Rocket Man," to quirkier, lesser-known gems like N*SYNC's "Space Cowboy" and "Cheer Up" by A Great Big World.

With this concert, Empire Pop Choir completes its first year of existence, and it's been such a wonderful journey to be on. Each term, we all get a little better (me included!), and I love seeing the growth of the ensemble, especially among our members who've returned from previous terms. Wednesday night rehearsals are one of my favorite activities each week, and even though I'm exhausted and usually a little hoarse afterward, it's such a fun group to work with. If this sounds like something you need in your life, join us next term! We have some great music in store and you'd be hard-pressed to find a more supportive choir community than this one.

As always, thank you for your support, and enjoy the show!

Heather Waid

Pop Choir Artistic Director

PROGRAM

A Sky Full of Stars

Written By: Guy Berryman, Jon Buckland, Will Champion, Chris Martin and Tim Bergling

Arranged By: Mac Huff

"A Sky Full of Stars" was originally recorded and released by Coldplay on their Album *Ghost Stories* in 2014. Coldplay frontman Chris Martin cites Perry as a musical inspiration for the song's single repeating chord sequence. The original song is Coldplay's dip into dance tracks and features house influences and a pounding bass drum. "A Sky Full of Stars" was designed to lift listeners out of the melancholy vibe featured on the majority of *Ghost Stories'* songs. Says frontman Chris Martin, "What that song

represents... is the release after you've climbed the mountain - after you've done anything challenging. That's why that song is so unashamedly happy and danceable: because that's what it needed to be."

Rocket Man

Written By: Elton John & Bernie Taupin

Arranged By: Chris Lawry, edited by Heather Waid

Long time Elton John collaborator/lyricist Bernie Taupin was driving down a road in the English countryside when the inspiration for "Rocket Man" hit. He recalls it arriving fully formed in his head and he scrambled to get home to record the lyrics before he forgot them. Ironic, given its now iconic stature. "Rocket Man" was written soon after the release of "Space Oddity" but Bernie Taupin cites a different source of inspiration; a short story by Ray Bradbury about a time when a career as an astronaut would become commonplace. "Rocket Man" was ranked by *Rolling Stone Magazine* as one of the Greatest Songs of All Time and it also gave Elton John's recent biopic its title.

Black Hole Sun

Written By: Chris Cornell

Arranged By: Chris Langton

Soloist: Alana Andrade

In 2019, the song "Black Hole Sun" is celebrating its 25th anniversary, calling back to the time of early Seattle grunge rock. The website *The Ringer* investigated the mysterious origins of the lyrics of "Black Hole Sun" only to find out that Chris Cornell would never admit to the song having any particular meaning. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the song's minor key and lilting melody shot it onto the charts, with support from its "horror cartoon" music video (still giving Pop Choir members nightmares to this day). This version of Black Hole Sun was arranged specifically for the Empire Pop Choir by Chris Langton who drew inspiration from the player piano arrangements on HBO's show *Westworld*.

Cosmic Love

Written By: Florence and the Machine

Arranged By: Katie Riegal and Heather Waid

Soloists: Julia Boesch

Florence Welch told *The Sunday Times* that Cosmic Love is, “a song about how being in love means you give yourself up to the dark, to being blind.” Although the subject matter may be heartfelt, the title was a joke that stuck during a hungover writing session. The song combines a pounding bass with a delicate harp and Florence’s ethereal driving vocals giving it a distinct aesthetic that is both light and bold. Its one of a kind vocals and classic text painting make it a favorite for soundtracks, and it has been featured on the TV shows *Grey’s Anatomy*, *Gossip Girl* and *Nikita*, among others.

Fly Me to the Moon

Written By: Bart Howard

Arranged By: Heather Waid

“Fly Me to the Moon” was originally entitled “In Other Words” and written by pianist/composer Bart Howard in 1954. Although the song has been recorded by numerous artists, it is Frank Sinatra’s 1964 version that is the most well known. The song is a classic love song, but thanks to its leading line, Frank Sinatra’s version became closely associated with the Apollo missions to the moon and was played on the Apollo 10 and Apollo 11 missions before the first landing on the moon. In 2012 it was sung by Diana Krall at Neil Armstrong’s memorial service.

Space Cowboy

Written By: Alex Greggs, Bradley Daymon Ralph, Lisa Lopez, Joseph Chasez, Inga Willis

Arranged By: Bryan Sharpe

Soloists: Natalie Peebles, Jennifer Fearing, and Margo Hollingsworth

“Space Cowboy” was recorded in 1999 during peak Y2K drama and released after the world had briefly thanked and then ignored whatever coders saved us from a tech apocalypse. Featuring laser sound effects, a killer rap from the late Lisa Left Eye Lopez, and Justin Timberlake’s infamous nasal vowel mispronunciations, “Space Cowboy” is the fun you never knew you needed. If the song’s message could be distilled into one footnote, according to *Bustle.com*, it would be “YOLO, but the Y2K version”. All joking aside, “Space Cowboy” is for the optimist in all of us, encouraging us to bravely face our laser-filled, high tech future with this rallying cry:

*“Why-yi-yi-yippie-yi-yay-yippie-yi-yo-yippie-yi-yay Why-yi-yi-yippie-yi-yay-yippie-yi-yo-yippie-yi-yo
Why-yi-yi-yippie-yi-yay-yippie-yi-yo-yippie-yi-yay
Why-yi-yi-yippie-yi-yay-yippie-yi-yo-yippie-yi-yo”*

Space Oddity

Written By: Jetse Bremer

Edited By: Heather Waid

Soloist: Lily Tanner

Inspired by the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the song “Space Oddity” was the first of David Bowie’s singles to chart in the UK. Fueled by the Space Race of the 60’s, the song was released one week before Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin set foot on the moon. Today, the song’s association with space exploration endures. Astronaut Chris Hadfield went viral after he recorded a cover of the song at the International Space Station. Before his death, David Bowie worked with his publisher to ensure that the cover was licensed properly for all to see, calling it the most poignant version of the song.

Gravity

Written By: Sara Bareilles

Arranged By: Heather Waid

Singer/composer Sara Bareilles wrote her heartbreaking ballad “Gravity” with the most relatable of

circumstances in mind. "Gravity' was born out of a high school relationship falling apart and me being a drama queen about it. I had a high school boyfriend who I was madly in love with, and we broke up my senior year and got back together. And then I went away to college, and every time I came home he was just a magnet for me. I could not remove myself, I couldn't move on, move out, move forward... it felt like a force that was bigger than a person." The same could be said for Bareilles's ballad, which alternately pulls back and pushes forward, working like its title to tether listeners to its lush chords and descending melodies.

Counting Stars

Written By: Ryan Tedder

Arranged By: Mark Brymer

In an interview with the Official Charts Company, singer/composer/superproducer/One Republic frontman/all around big-deal-music-person Ryan Tedder said, "I had the idea for Counting Stars originally in the summer of 2012 when I was in the Hamptons. I was working in the largest house I've ever stepped foot in, which was being rented by Jay-Z and Beyoncé. I was in the middle of working on my most recent album with OneRepublic, *Native*, and during that time I was determined not to work with any other artists. I broke the promise because I also did sessions that year with Beyoncé. When Jay-Z and Beyoncé invite you to stay with them in the Hamptons, you don't say no!" He continued, "I was out there for about five days, and on the second day I woke up early and I started combing through the internet, searching for stuff that would inspire me for Beyoncé. I ended up coming across this weird song that had this indigenous folk sound to it that just struck me like lightning. I didn't like the verses or lyrics, but I loved the feel and movement of it. That ended up inspiring "Counting Stars." I debated playing it for Beyoncé and putting it forward for her album, but it didn't feel like a song Beyoncé would record." With all respects to our Queen Beyonce, it was a good call. "Counting Stars" was a huge hit for One Republic. It is one of the most watched YouTube videos of all time.

Cheer Up

Written By: A Great Big World

Arranged By: C. Reitz and Heather Waid

Soloists: Erin O'Brien Skyles and Emily Kenna

Our encore brings us back down from space to inspiration much closer to home. A Great Big World Frontman Ian Axel cites Yosemite National Park as the inspiration for our sweetly weird closing number. Axel told *Huffington Post*, "We had just visited Yosemite and saw all the stars for the first time. You just can't see any in New York City. And seeing them gave us a new perspective on everything." We loved that this song celebrated the wonder and beauty of our universe. It's a great big realm full of beauty to celebrate and cherish.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR: Heather Waid

MANAGING DIRECTOR/ACCOMPANIST: Emily Maghanoy Perez

PRODUCER: Jessilee Windhaus

SOUND ENGINEER: Ben Reese

HOUSE MANAGER: Sadie Jeffries

CHOIR MEMBERS

Alana Andrade

Alexia Gotwalt

Ali Brimhall

Alyssa Al-Jamea

Cathy Duggan

Christina Coffaro

Denise Delmatier Theisen

Donna Hardaker

Emily Kenna

Erik Skyles

Gabriela Diaz

Genevieve Carreon

Jennifer Fearing
Julia Boesch
Laurie McCallum
Lily Tanner
Margo Hollingsworth
Naomi Harris
Natalie Peeples
Patti Dites
Salena Acox
Sarah Torres
Serena Mcilwain
Sumita Ram
Tresa Edmunds
Trina Rose
Vedrana Novosel

SPECIAL GUESTS

Bass: Nathan Chung

Percussion: Acme Lee

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