



PSALM SEA

PRESENTED AT
Pacific Spirit
United Church

ON
Sept 23, 2022
7:30PM

CONDUCTOR
Kari
Turunen

ORGAN
Stephen
Smith



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VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR

Artistic Director Kari Turunen began leading the Vancouver Chamber Choir - one of Canada's premier professional choral ensembles - in September 2019, its 49th concert season.

Jon Washburn founded the choir in 1971 and it has become an amazing success story, ranking with the handful of North America's best professional choruses and noted for its diverse repertoire and performing excellence. The choir has presented concerts at home in Vancouver and on tour across Canada. International excursions have taken them to the USA, Mexico, Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Finland, France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.

Honoured with the Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence by Chorus America, the choir has performed countless concerts and broadcasts, released 36 recordings and received numerous awards. Foremost supporters of Canadian music, they are responsible for commissions and premieres of 334 choral works by 145 composers and arrangers, most of whom are Canadian. Over the years the choir has sung over 4,000 performances of works by Canadian composers, in addition to their extensive international repertoire.

The choir's award-winning educational programs include the *Conductors' Symposium* for advanced choral conductors, *Interplay* interactive workshops for choral composers, *Focus* professional development program for student singers, *OnSite* visitations for school choirs, the biennial *Young Composers Competition*, and many on-tour workshops and residencies.



KARI TURUNEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Kari Turunen was appointed Artistic Director of the Vancouver Chamber Choir – one of Canada's premier professional choral ensembles – in 2019, its 49th concert season. He is a versatile performer and continues to play an important role in the choral music scene in his native Finland as an artistic director, educator and administrator. He has toured extensively across Europe and Asia as a conductor, performer, clinician and adjudicator.

Dr. Turunen has been awarded numerous international prizes with the choral ensembles he has directed: Akademiska Damkören Lyran, Akademiska Sångföreningen, Kampin Laulu Chamber Choir, Chorus Cantorum Finlandiae, Spira Ensemble and the professional early music ensembles Ensemble Petraloysio and I Dodici, with which he continues to work. He was a founding member of Lumen Valo and appeared with them in over 250 concerts and nine critically acclaimed recordings. In 2008, he was named Finnish Choral Conductor of the Year and is the recipient of over 20 grants from Finnish and Finnish-Swedish Cultural Foundations.

In addition to his artistic activities, Dr. Turunen has been active in festival administration. He is the Artistic Director of the 2022 Finnish-Swedish Song Celebration and the 2023 Tampere Vocal Music Festival and was the Artistic Director of the Aurore Renaissance Festival in Helsinki from 2015–2020. He was also Chair of the Finnish Choral Directors' Association (FCDA) from 1997–2018.

Kari Turunen holds a doctorate in early music performance practice from the University of the Arts, Helsinki, and an MA in choral conducting from the Sibelius Academy. He lives in Vancouver with his wife, Anna.



The Vancouver Chamber Choir acknowledges that it operates and performs on the unceded Indigenous land belonging to the Coast Salish peoples, including the territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We are grateful for this privilege.

VANCOUVER
CHAMBER CHOIR

SOPRANOS

Emily M Cheung
Christina Cichos
Kiyomi Hori
Siobhan Waldock

ALTOS

Dinah Ayre
Tabitha Brasso-Ernst
Maria Golas
Fabiana Katz

TENORS

Eric Biskupski
Oliver Dalton
Eric Schwarzhoff
Michael Stahl

BASSES

Steven Bélanger
Paul Nash
George Roberts
Wim Vermeulen

VANCOUVER CHAMBER CHOIR
KARI TURUNEN, CONDUCTOR

WITH

STEPHEN SMITH, ORGAN

SEA PSALM

Meine Seel' ist stille zu Gott, Op. 53 No. 1 (1865)

Moritz Hauptmann
(1792-1868)

Seesama meri (2019)

Evelin Seppar
(b. 1986)

Emily M Cheung and Kiyomi Hori, sopranos
Dinah Ayre, alto Oliver Dalton, tenor

Sea Psalm (2005)

Stephen Smith
(b. 1966)

Du kröner året (from *Två Psalmer*, 2009)

Matthew Whittall
(b. 1975)

Fabiana Katz, mezzo-soprano Steven Bélanger, baritone

Canticum calamitatis maritimæ (1997)

Jaakko Mäntyjärvi
(b. 1963)

Siobhan Waldock, soprano Michael Stahl, tenor

INTERMISSION

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, SWV 35
(from *Psalmen Davids*, 1619)

Heinrich Schütz
(1585-1672)

Quomodo cantabimus (1585)

William Byrd
(1543-1623)

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, BWV 225 (ca. 1727)

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Christina Cichos, soprano Maria Golas, alto
Eric Biskupski, tenor Steven Bélanger, baritone

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- ❖ **Due West** Stephen Chatman, Vol. 2 With oboist Roger Cole and pianist Linda Lee Thomas.
- ❖ **Due East** Stephen Chatman, Vol. 3 The Canadian composer's latest pieces since 2000.
- ❖ **Rise! Shine!** * Music of Jon Washburn Including *The Star*, *A Stephen Foster Medley*, *Chinese Melodies*, *Rossetti Songs*, *God's Lamb*, *Noel Sing We!*, *Behold I build an house* and *Rise! Shine!*

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- ❖ **A Dylan Thomas Christmas** * The Vancouver Chamber Choir's signature performance of *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, read by Welsh actor Russell Roberts with special carol settings by Jon Washburn.
- ❖ **A World Christmas** Carols and seasonal songs of many lands from guitarist and arranger Ed Henderson, the Worldfest Ensemble and the Vancouver Chamber Choir with Jon Washburn conducting.
- ❖ **The Miracle of Christmas** Christmas music with a colourful Central and South American flavour played by the ensemble Ancient Cultures with several tracks featuring the Vancouver Chamber Choir.

Listeners, critics, and audience members alike know Stephen Smith as “a sensitive and dynamic performer” with a “highly poetic touch” and “superb musicianship which illuminates everything he plays.” Renowned pianist Jane Coop has called her former student “an extremely intelligent and perceptive musician who has great facility and strength in his technique”;



and Simon Carrington, a founding member of the King's Singers, has called him “a magnificent pianist,” adding that “it's a privilege to hear such beautiful playing!”

Mr. Smith grew up in rural Nova Scotia, where he sang and played the piano from an early age. After initial studies in his home province in both piano and organ, he attended the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. While there, he participated in national and international competitions, and won numerous awards and distinctions. Since 1990, he has lived in Vancouver, obtaining a Doctoral degree in Piano Performance from the University of British Columbia, and becoming a fixture of the city's choral scene, regularly accompanying the Vancouver Chamber Choir, Vancouver Men's Chorus, Vancouver Bach Choir, Elektra Women's Choir, and many other ensembles.

He is also a published composer who has been commissioned by such organizations as the CBC, the National Youth Choir, and the BC Choral Federation, and whose music is recorded and performed with great frequency by choirs all over North America and beyond. His work as both accompanist and composer can be heard on dozens of CDs in commercial release, and he has also produced a solo album entitled *Kaleidoscope*, from most music streaming services.

PROGRAM NOTES, TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

SEA PSALM

The starting point for this concert was Stephen Smith's *Sea Psalm*. The rest of the program unfolded from this title – and the fact that Stephen's work has an organ part. All the music either has the sea as its subject, or is a psalm setting, and, at best, a combination of the two. The first half focuses mostly on music of our time and the second consists of three classical works from between the 1680s and the 1720s.

The second half introduces a secondary theme. The Schütz and Bach motets are based on psalms exhorting us to sing a new song in praise of the creator, and creation. I have always found the idea of 'a new song' as the highest form of praise intriguing, and oddly enough, it feels most relevant in the world we live in. William Byrd's motet is the flip side of the coin with its central question: how can we sing songs of praise in this world with its long, dark shadows? I have no simple answers to this question, but hopefully some possible answers lie in the glories of the music itself.

Moritz Hauptmann **Meine Seel' ist stille zu Gott, Op. 53 No. 1**

Moritz Hauptmann was a German theorist, instrumentalist and composer. According to music encyclopedias, he was considered by his contemporaries and later generations as something of a traditionalist in his music; as someone who was more interested in forms and compositional balance than intuitive expression. If this is true, Hauptmann's *Meine Seel' ist stille zu Gott* (My soul finds rest in God) is the exception to the rule: this little gem of a motet suddenly comes alive in the middle section in minor, which is both beautiful and heart-rendering.

Meine Seel' ist stille zu Gott,
denn er ist meine Hoffnung, mein Schutz, mein Heil!
Meine Seele harret des Herrn,
denn er ist meine Gott, meine Macht, mein Hort, meine Hilf,
ist meine Hoffnung, mein Schutz, mein Heil!
Ich bau' auf ihn, auf Gott, den Herrn!

(Ps. 62: 2,7)

My soul finds rest in God,
for he is my hope, my shelter, my salvation!
My soul waits for the Lord,
for he is my God, my strength, my treasure, my help,
is my hope, my shelter, my salvation!
I put my trust in him, in God, in the Lord!

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Evelin Seppar Seesama meri

Evelin Seppar is an Estonian composer whose choral music strikes me as original and fresh. She often uses textures that remind me of a group of laser beams focusing on one point. The event horizon is never rushed and the music grows and wanes in intensity – in fact, I think it is this horizontal fluctuation of energy that is most interesting in her music. *Seesama meri* (The Same Sea) is set to a poem by Jaan Kaplinski, a prominent Estonian poet, philosopher, translator and politician. Seppar sets its sparse lines in music that is a little like the sea: at once ever the same and yet ever changing.

Seesama	The same
meri	sea
meis	in us
kõigis	all
punane	red
pime	dark
soe	warm
kõigi	from every quarter
kaarte tuulte	winds throbbing
tuksumine	in the
südame purjedes	heart's sails
vahujoom	A line of foam
läbi	through
valge	light
avaruse	space
mõlalt	from the oar
pudenev	falling
küsimus	question
veeremas	rises
laine-pinnale	back
tagasi	to
hirm	the surface
pimeduse	fear
taga	of darkness
kas seesama	sea – the same
meri	sea
ootamas	waiting
merd	for the sea

(Jaan Kaplinski)

(Translation by Kari Turunen)

VANCOUVER
CHAMBER
CHOIR

2022 / 23 SEASON

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Featuring the world premiere of Peter Hannan's
Runs deep, bends time (2022) for choir and electronics
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Stephen Smith Sea Psalm

The composer Stephen Smith writes:

The text of *Sea Psalm* includes verses from Psalms 93 and 29 (92 and 28 in the Latin Vulgate), chosen for their reference to the sea, and for the opulent sounds of the words themselves. The music was commissioned for the first concert the Vancouver Chamber Choir did following a major rebuild of the PSUC organ in 2005. It begins with a composed melody in the style of Gregorian chant, sung very quietly over a barely-audible low drone supplied by the organ pedals. At the climax of the piece, the same tune is thundered out by the pedals, almost drowning out the choir's fortissimo. In between, the organ gets to show off some of its most scintillating and diverse colours, as the choir suggests both the calming quality of the sea's patterns and the awesomeness of its power.

Levaverunt flumina, Domine:
levaverunt flumine voces suas.
Levaverunt flumina gurgites suos
vocibus aquarum multuarum.
Vox Domini super aquas;
Deus gloriæ intonuit.
Grandes fluctus maris;
grandis Dominus Deus. Alleluia.

The floods have lifted up, O Lord:
the floods have lifted up their voice.
The floods have lifted up their waves
with the noise of many waters.
The voice of the Lord is upon the waters;
the God of majesty has thundered.
Great are the surges of the sea;
great is the Lord God. Alleluia.

(from Psalms 93 and 29)

Matthew Whittall Du kröner året

Our composer-in-residence for the 2022/23 season is Canadian-Finnish Matthew Whittall. Originally from Quebec, Whittall's studies took him to the US and ultimately Finland, where he earned a doctorate in composition at the University of the Arts in Helsinki. Psalm 65, *Du kröner året* (You crown the year) from *Två Psalmer* (2009) is a good introduction to Whittall's mellifluous style that rises from tradition but gives it a new twist. The two soloists act as precentors and the choir heads their call in warm and full harmonies.

De som bor vid jordens ändar
står häpna inför dina mäktiga gärningar,
öster och väster fyller du med jubel.
Du tar dig an jorden och ger den regn,
du gör den bördig och rik.
Guds flod är full av vatten.
Du får säden att växa,
du sörjer för jorden.
Du vattnar åkerns fåror och jämnar ut dess tiltor.
Med regnskurar gör du jorden mjuk,
du välsignar det som växer.
Du kröner året med goda gåvor,
där du går fram gror feta skördar.
Ödemarkens beten frodas,
höjderna klär sig i jubel.
Ängarna smyckas av fårhjordar
och dalarna höljer sig i säd.
Allt är jubel och sång.

The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.
You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.
You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers
and bless its crops.
You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

(Psalm 65:9–14)

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Jaakko Mäntyjärvi
Canticum calamitatis maritimæ

The sinking of the car ferry MS *Estonia* en route from Tallinn to Stockholm in September 1994 was met with disbelief in the countries around the Baltic Sea. The idea that such a floating hotel could sink seemed incredulous, let alone that it could take with it almost a thousand souls. Jaakko Mäntyjärvi's *Canticum calamitatis maritimæ* (Song of Maritime Calamity) from 1997 recounts this tragedy. It combines three texts: the opening of the traditional Requiem Mass, news text reporting the calamity in Latin, and a psalm that is often called the Mariner's Psalm (Ps. 107). The Requiem text is recited as in quiet prayer; the news is reported by a chanting tenor soloist; whereas the psalm is the core of the work, set to an eight-voice choir. An important and delicate touch is given at the beginning and ending of the work by a soprano soloist who sings a folksong-like melody based on "Nearer my God, to thee".

Lux æterna luceat eis, Domine,
et lux perpetua luceat eis.
Miserere Domine.

May the eternal light shine upon them, O Lord,
and may perpetual light shine upon them.
Have mercy, O Lord.

Plus octingenti homines vitam
amiserunt calamitate navali
in Mari Baltico septentrionali facta.
Navis traiectoria nomine Estonia,
cum Tallinno Stockholmiam versus navigaret,
sæva tempestate orta eversa et submersa est.
In navi circiter mille vectores erant.
Calamitate Estoniæ
nongenti decem homines perierunt,
centum undequadraginta sunt servati.

Over eight hundred people
perished in a shipwreck
in the northern Baltic Sea.
The car ferry Estonia,
en route from Tallinn to Stockholm,
was overturned in a severe storm and sank.
There were about 1000 passengers on board,
910 people lost their lives
in the wreck of the Estonia;
139 were saved.

(Nuntii Latini)

Qui descendunt mare in navibus,
facientes operationem in aquis multis:
ipsi viderunt opera Domini,
et mirabilia ejus in profundo.
Dixit et stetit spiritus procellæ,
et exaltati sunt fluctus ejus.
Ascendunt usque ad cælos,
et descendunt usque ad abyssos;
anima eorum in malis tabescebat.
Turbati sunt, et moti sunt sicut ebrius,
et omnis sapientia eorum devorata est.
Et clamaverunt ad Dominum cum tribularentur;
et de necessitatibus eorum eduxit eos.
Et statuit procellam ejus in auram,
et siluerunt fluctus ejus.
Et lætati sunt quia siluerunt;
et deduxit eos in portum voluntatis eorum.

They that go down to the sea in ships,
that do business in great waters;
These see the works of the Lord,
and his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven,
they go down again to the depths;
their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
and are at their wit's end.
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
and he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
so that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet;
so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.

(Psalm 107, 23-30)

Requiem æternam.

Eternal rest.

INTERMISSION

Heinrich Schütz
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, SWV 35

Heinrich Schütz studied in Venice as a young man under the tutelage of Giovanni Gabrieli. In many ways, the rest of Schütz's life was spent in creating a German compositional tradition that built on the aesthetic ideals and the compositional forms of his Italian paragons. In this, he was incredibly successful – it is also impossible to think of the Germanic Baroque tradition without the link built by Schütz. His *Psalmen Davids* (Psalms of David, published in 1619) are based on the Venetian double choir style, but his setting of the German language raises these works far beyond any sort of stylistic exercise. Every sentence receives its own musical shape and his *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* (Sing to the Lord a new song) is exceptionally full of word-painting and quick changes of mood.

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
denn er tut Wunder.
Er sieget mit seiner Rechten
und mit seinem heiligen Arm
Der Herr lässet sein Heil verkündigen;
vor den Völkern lässt er seine Gerechtigkeit offenbaren
Er gedenket an seine Gnade und Wahrheit
dem Hause Israel.
Aller Welt Enden sehen
das Heil unsers Gottes.
Jauchzet dem Herren, alle Welt;
singet, rühmet und lobet!
Lobet den Herren mit
Harfen und Psalmen
Mit Trompeten und Posaunen
jauchzet vor dem Herrn, dem Könige!
Das Meer brause und was drinnen ist,
der Erdboden und die drauf wohnen.
Die Wasserströme frohlocken,
und alle Berge sind fröhlich vor dem Herrn;
denn er kommt, das Erdreich zu richten.
Er wird den Erdboden richten mit Gerechtigkeit
und die Völker mit Recht.

(Psalm 98)

Ehre sei dem Vater und dem Sohn,
und auch dem heiligen Geiste,
wie es war im Anfang, jetzt und immerdar
und von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit. Amen

O sing unto the Lord a new song:
for he hath done marvellous things.
With his own right hand, and with his holy arm
hath he gotten himself the victory.
The Lord declared his salvation: his righteousness
hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen.
He hath remembered his mercy and truth toward
the house of Israel:
and all the ends of the world have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands:
sing, rejoice, and give thanks.
Praise the Lord upon the harp: sing to the harp
with a psalm of thanksgiving.
With trumpets also and shawms:
O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King.
Let the sea make a noise, and all that therein is:
the round world, and they that dwell therein.
Let the floods clap their hands,
and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord:
for he is come to judge the earth.
With righteousness shall he judge the world:
and the people with equity.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

William Byrd
Quomodo cantabimus

In 1584, Philippe de Monte, a maestro of the court of the Habsburgs in Prague, sent William Byrd a musical greeting: an eight-voice setting of the first verses of Psalm 137 (By the rivers of Babylon). The intention was clear: de Monte knew that Byrd, a life-long Catholic working in service of the Anglican church, had to suppress his Catholic views (Catholics were seen as recusants and even traitors in mid-1580s England). Byrd's reply was elegant. The following year he wrote an eight-part motet on the remaining verses of the psalm. It is a work that far exceeds de Monte's motet in its authentically eight-part writing, canonic structures and above all, in its expressiveness. It is not difficult to substitute Jerusalem with Rome and hear this motet as a lament of the religious intolerance of Byrd's England.

Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini
in terra aliena?
Si oblitus fuero tui, Jerusalem,
oblivioni detur dextra mea.
Adhæreat lingua mea faucibus meis;
si non meminero tui.
Si non proposuero Jerusalem in principio lætitiæ meæ.
Memor esto, Domine, filiorum Edom
in die Jerusalem.

(Psalm 137:4–7a)

How shall we sing the Lord's song:
in a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem:
let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee,
let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.
Yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem in my mirth.
Remember the children of Edom, O Lord,
in the day of Jerusalem.

Johann Sebastian Bach
Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied, BWV 225

Considering the fame of J.S. Bach's *Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied* (Sing to the Lord a new song), it is quite surprising that there is no certainty as to its time of inception or its original use. The motet is possibly from 1727 and might have been intended as part of the memorial service of the Queen of Poland. These enigmas aside, it is a marvelous motet that, in contrast to the Schütz *Singet*, stretches its material to its limits. The first movement begins with exhortations to sing and later flows into an impressive, florid fugue. The second movement feels like a meditation on a chorale, with the solo quartet commenting on each strophe of the chorale. The last section consists of two parts: a dance-like dialogue between the two choirs and a four-voice fugue full of runs and small rhythmic twists and ending with a resounding Hallelujah.

Singet dem Herrn ein neues Lied,
die Gemeinde der Heiligen sollen ihn loben.
Israel freue sich des, der ihn gemacht hat.
Die Kinder Zion sei'n fröhlich über ihrem Könige,
sie sollen loben seinen Namen im Reihem;
mit Pauken und mit Harfen sollen sie ihm spielen.

(Psalm 149: 1-3)

[solo quartet]

Gott, nimm dich ferner unser an,
denn ohne dich ist nichts getan
mit allen unsern Sachen.

Drum sei du unser Schirm und Licht,
und trügt uns unsre Hoffnung nicht,
so wirst du's ferner machen.

Wohl dem, der sich nur steif und fest
auf dich und deine Huld verlässt.

[choir]

Wie sich ein Vater erbarmet
über seine junge Kinderlein,
so tut der Herr uns allen,
so wir ihn kindlich fürchten rein.

Er kennt das arm Gemächte,
Gott weiß, wir sind nur Staub,
gleichwie das Gras vom Rechen,
ein Blum und fallend Laub.

Der Wind nur drüber wehet,
so ist es nicht mehr da,
also der Mensch vergehet,
sein End, das ist ihm nah.

(Johann Grammen, 1530)

Lobet den Herrn in seinen Taten,
lobet ihn in seiner großen Herrlichkeit!
Alles, was Odem hat, lobe den Herrn, halleluja!

(Psalm 150: 2, 6)

Sing to the Lord a new song,
the assembly of saints shall praise him.
Let Israel rejoice in him who made her.
Let the children of Zion be glad in their king,
they shall praise his name in the dance;
with timbrel and with harps they shall play for him.

God, accept us furthermore,
for without you there is nothing done
toward any of our concerns.

Thus be our shield and light,
and lest our hopes deceive us,
you will continue to do so.

Blessed be the one, who fast and firm
surrenders himself to you and your grace.

Just as a father has compassion
for his young, little children
so does the Lord treat us, the poor,
so we fear him purely, like children.

He recognizes poor humanity,
God knows we are but dust,
just like grass from a rake,
a blossom or a fallen leaf.

The wind simply blows it about
and it is there no more.
So too the human passes away,
his ending is nigh.

Praise the Lord for his acts,
praise him in his great splendor!
Let all that has breath praise the Lord, hallelujah!

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