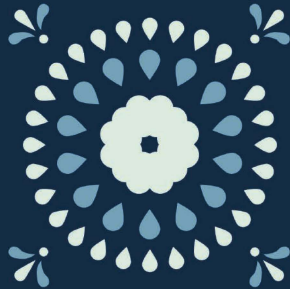


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CLASSICS



SUN MOON  
STARS RAIN  
PHOENIX CHORALE

CHRISTOPHER GABBITAS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

# SUN MOON STARS RAIN

1	<b>I Found Night</b>	Connor Koppin	[4.14]
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11	<b>Little you, looking up</b>	Dale Trumbore	[9.11]
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16	<b>She walks in beauty</b>	Toby Hession	[4.26]
17	<b>The Sun whose rays are all ablaze</b>	Arthur Sullivan arr. Bob Chilcott, Christopher Gabbitas	[3.22]
18	<b>Water Night</b>	Eric Whitacre	[4.55]
	Total timings:		[1.12.56]

PHOENIX CHORALE  
CHRISTOPHER GABBITAS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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Throughout history, humans have been captivated by the celestial bodies above and the atmospheric phenomena around them. The sun, moon, stars, and rain have played pivotal roles in shaping our cultures, beliefs, and understanding of the world. This enduring fascination stems from a complex interplay of practical needs, spiritual yearnings, and scientific curiosity. Poets and composers have certainly not remained immune to this fascination and have used it as subject matter for their art - indeed, the phrase “sun moon stars rain” is a direct quote from EE Cummings’ poem *Anyone lived in a pretty how town*, which has served as inspiration for the music on this recording.

In an age of rapid technological advancement and urban living, one might expect this fascination to wane. Yet, it persists and even grows. Solar eclipses still draw crowds of spectators, lunar cycles continue to captivate, stargazing remains a popular hobby, and the arrival of rain still has the power to alter moods and plans.

The sun, our nearest star, has been revered across civilizations as a life-giving force. Ancient Egyptians worshiped Ra, the sun god, while the Aztecs paid homage to Huitzilopochtli. Beyond religious significance, the sun’s daily journey across the sky provided early humans with

a natural timekeeper, crucial for agricultural practices and societal organization. Today, our fascination continues through scientific endeavors, from harnessing solar energy to studying its effects on our climate and health. The sun’s constancy and inscrutability is personified by composers Dan Forrest and Sir Arthur Sullivan in contrasting styles in *The sun never says* and *The sun whose rays are all ablaze*, both works introducing very human emotions in love and devotion and seeking enlightenment from above.

The moon, Earth’s constant companion, has long been a source of wonder and mystery. Its changing phases have guided lunar calendars, influenced tidal predictions, and inspired countless myths and legends. The moon’s soft, reflected light has been a muse for poets and artists, evoking emotions ranging from romance to melancholy. Laura Mvula’s *Sing to the moon* captures this atmosphere perfectly, touching on themes of mental health and unrequited love and drawing strength from the nightly moonrise and the comfort that its gentle light can bring. Connor Koppin’s *I found night* speaks similarly to the melancholy we find in darkness, and the emotional consequences.

Stars, those distant pinpricks of light, have served as beacons of navigation and imagination for millennia. Ancient mariners used the stars to traverse vast oceans, while diverse cultures wove elaborate stories around star patterns, creating constellations that reflected their worldviews. The development of astronomy as a science has only deepened our fascination, as we've come to understand stars as the building blocks of galaxies and the birthplaces of elements essential to life itself. In popular culture, the stars have become synonymous with fame, glitz and glamour - we speak of pop stars, movie stars and sports stars - but it is our intrinsic fascination with the true stars above us that gives us real pause for thought, and there is a whole album's worth of choral material here, and more! In this program, music by Erika Lloyd and Frank Ticheli consider life, love, and our very existence through this fascination and, in a world premiere performance of commissioned work *Little you, looking up* by Dale Trumbore, the composer and lyricist paints a perfect, intimate vignette of our relationship with the stars through the eyes of a child, learning about the universe for the first time.

Rain, a more earthbound phenomenon, has been no less influential in capturing human attention. As a vital resource for agriculture and survival,

rain has been both celebrated and feared across cultures. Rain dances and prayers for precipitation are found in traditions worldwide, highlighting its perceived connection to divine will. The sound and smell of rain often evoke powerful emotions and memories, while its visual representation in art and literature serves as a metaphor for renewal, cleansing, and sometimes melancholy. In our program these literal benefits of rainfall are used to illustrate metaphors, whether in relation to social justice (*April Rain Song*), the futility of war (*There will come soft rains*) or the blessings that spring from religious faith (*As torrents in summer*).

Our fascination with these natural phenomena reflects a deeper human need to understand, and to connect with, the world around us. They represent constants in an ever-changing world, providing a sense of continuity and cycles that mirror what we desire within our own lives. The sun and moon mark the passage of days and months, stars remind us of our place in a vast universe, and rain connects us to the Earth's life-giving processes.

Moreover, these elements challenge us intellectually. From ancient sundials to modern solar panels, from lunar calendars to moon landings, from astrological charts to deep space

telescopes, and from rain dances to weather satellites, our fascination has driven innovation and expanded our knowledge. William Yanesh's setting of Walt Whitman's *The Astronomer* considers whether wisdom comes at the price of wonder, and suggests that it is better perhaps simply to enjoy the spectacle without full understanding.

This enduring fascination speaks to something fundamental in the human experience – a mix of

awe at the natural world, a quest for understanding our place within it, and a recognition of our dependence on forces far greater than ourselves. This is nothing new: Shakespeare, Lord Byron, and Octavio Paz are amongst the literary greats who have brought this awe to bear in their poetry and prose and inspired composers Sir John Rutter, Toby Hession and Eric Whitacre in their contributions to this programme.

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## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### I Found Night

Connor Koppin

Text: Greg DiMarco

Amidst a sea of lights  
And star-swept skies,  
It was not silent nor still  
But filled with wandering eyes.

The peace in me was swept away,  
As sleepless I did rise,  
Another moon, unending gloom,  
Plays light across my eyes.

If I could sleep I would dream the sun,  
With radiant earth-bound joy,  
If I could sleep I would dream the stars.

But in the night I find no hope,  
Forlorn to wander more.  
I found the night and it found me,  
With cold unwavering eyes

### There will come soft rains

Connor Koppin

Text: Sara Teasdale

There will come soft rain and the smell of the ground,  
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound;

And frogs in the pools singing at night,  
And wild plum-trees in tremulous white;

Robins will wear their feathery fire  
Whistling their whims on a low fence wire.

And not one will know of the war, not one  
Will care at last when it is done.

Not one would mind, neither bird nor  
tree, If mankind perished utterly.

And Spring herself when she woke at dawn.  
Would scarcely know that we were gone.

### Three Poems of Sara Teasdale “Constellation”

Frank Ticheli

#### From the Sea

For us no starlight stilled the April fields,  
No birds awoke in darkling trees for us,  
Yet where we walked the city’s street that night  
Felt in our feet the singing fire of spring,  
And in our path we left a trail of light  
Soft as the phosphorescence of the sea  
When night submerges in the vessel’s wake  
A heaven of unborn evanescent stars.

#### The Falling Star

I saw a star slide down the sky,  
Blinding the north as it went by,  
Too burning and too quick to hold,

Too lovely to be bought or sold,  
Good only to make wishes on  
And then forever to be gone.

### There will be Stars

There will be stars over the place forever;  
Though the house we loved and the street we  
loved are lost,  
Every time the earth circles her orbit  
On the night the autumn equinox is crossed,  
Two stars we knew, poised on the peak of midnight  
Will reach their zenith; stillness will be deep;  
There will be stars over the place forever,  
There will be stars forever, while we sleep.

### The Astronomer

William Yanesh  
Text: Walt Whitman

When I heard the learn’d astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures,  
were ranged in columns before me,  
When I was shown the charts and diagrams,  
to add, divide, and measure them,  
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he  
lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,  
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,  
Till rising and gliding out I wander’d off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,  
Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.

### Sing to the Moon

Steven James Brown and Laura Mvula,  
arr. Laura Mvula  
Text: Laura Mvula

Hey there you, shattered in a thousand pieces  
Weeping in the darkest nights  
Hey there you, try to stand up on your own two feet  
And stumble into the sky

When the lights go out and you’re on your own  
How you’re gonna make it through till the morning sun’

Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, lead you to the other side  
Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, heaven’s gonna turn the time

Hey there you, looking for a brighter season  
Need to lay your burden down  
Hey there you, drowning in a hopeless feeling  
Buried under deeper ground

When the lights go out it’s a waiting game  
Never gonna see a day when your world will change  
Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, lead you to the other side

Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, heaven’s gonna turn the time  
Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, lead you to the other side

Sing to the moon and the stars will shine  
Over you, heaven's gonna turn the time

### Cells, Planets

Erika Lloyd, arr. Vince Peterson  
Text: Erika Lloyd

So far away, far away.  
So far away, far away,  
when all will shine and all will play hey.  
The stars will open up and all will be  
tiny pieces of galaxy,  
reflected in you and me...  
Cells, planets, same thing...

Bright electric lights on all the leaves,  
and everything growing from a tree,  
water's blood, and roots are veins.

I don't know you but I like you,  
I don't know you but I miss you,  
I don't know you but I need you...

The smallest is the biggest thing  
and in all the world the love  
is the love from me to you...

### Be not afraid

John Rutter  
Text: William Shakespeare

Be not afraid; the isle is full of noises, Sounds and  
sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not. Ready  
to drop upon me; that, when I waked, I cried to  
dream again.

### April Rain Song

Robert A. Harris  
Text: Langston Hughes

Let the rain kiss you  
Let the rain beat upon your head with silver liquid drops  
Let the rain sing you a lullaby  
The rain makes still pools on the sidewalk  
The rain makes running pools in the gutter  
The rain plays a little sleep song on our roof at night  
And I love the rain.

### Little you, looking up

Dale Trumbore  
Phoenix Chorale Commission  
Text: Dale Trumbore

Little you, looking up,  
fluent in the language of stars  
and of sky, lights so fierce and far  
and bright, you thought  
they must be eternal.

Little you, sleeping under  
a glow-in-the-dark map  
of your imagination, under  
your grandmother's quilt,  
its constellation of stitches.

Little you, unaware  
that even stars flare out.

Where did you read it first, or hear it?  
—an asteroid, hundreds of years from now,  
ending life on earth.

Your mother tried to reassure you:  
We'll be long gone by then  
she said, which only made it worse:  
the planet gone, and you, and her.

Little you, no longer eternal,  
crying under your grandmother's quilt,  
the sky a floor that could swallow  
you whole.

Remember: before you were bound  
by Earth's petty rotations, you spoke  
to the sun in her language of stars.

Fearless you, looking up,  
unafraid of change.

Older now, still looking up,  
sleeping under your grandmother's quilt

though her own bright sun  
faded years ago.

Name your daughters after stars  
Tuck them under your grandmother's quilt  
So whether they're looking down or up,  
they'll see themselves reflected:

Small and fierce and bright.  
Meticulous. Unhurried.  
Possessing their own  
gravity. All time.  
All sky. All light.  
Almost eternal.

*This piece was commissioned by Phoenix Chorale  
with generous support from Mary Farrington-Lorch.*

### As torrents in summer

Sir Edward Elgar  
Text: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

As torrents in summer, Half dried in their channels,  
Suddenly rise, tho' the sky is still cloudless.  
For rain has been falling.  
Far off at their fountains;

So hearts that are fainting Grow full to o'erflowing,  
And they that behold it, Marvel, and know not  
That God at their fountains  
Far off has been raining!

**The Sun never says**

Dan Forrest

Text: Daniel Ladinsky

Even

After

All this time

The sun never says to the earth,

“You owe  
Me.”

Look

What happens

With a love like that.

It lights the

Whole

Sky.

**Underneath the stars**

Kate Rusby

Arr. Jim Clements

Underneath the stars I'll meet you  
Underneath the stars I'll greet you  
There beneath the stars I'll leave you  
Before you go of your own free will  
Go gently

Underneath the stars you met me  
Underneath the stars you left me  
I wonder if the stars regret me  
At least you'll go of your own free will  
Go gently

Here beneath the stars I'm landing  
And here beneath the stars not ending  
Why on earth am I pretending?  
I'm here again, the stars befriending  
They come and go of their own free will  
Go gently

Underneath the stars you met me  
And underneath the stars you left me  
I wonder if the stars regret me  
I'm sure they'd like me if they only met me  
They come and go for their own free will  
Go gently... Go gently... Go gently..

**With a lily in your hand**

Eric Whitacre

Text: Federico García Lorca Translated by  
Jerome Rothenburg

With a lily in your hand  
I leave you, o my night love!  
Little widow of my single star  
I find you  
Tamer of dark  
Butterflies!

I keep along my way  
After a thousand years are gone  
You'll see me  
O my night love!  
By the blue footpath  
Tamer of dark  
Stars  
I'll make my way  
Until the universe  
Can fit inside  
My heart

**She walks in beauty**

Toby Hession

Text: George, Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.  
One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face;  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.  
And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,

The smiles that win, the tints that glow,  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

**The Sun whose rays are all ablaze**

Sir Arthur Sullivan

Text: Sir WS Gilbert

Arranged by Bob Chilcott (this rearrangement  
Christopher Gabbitas 2023)

The sun, whose rays are all ablaze with ever-living glory,  
does not deny his majesty--he scorns to tell a story!  
He don't exclaim, "I blush for shame, so kindly be  
indulgent";  
but fierce and bold, in fiery gold, he glories all effulgent.

I mean to rule the earth, as he the sky--  
We really know our worth, the sun and I!

Observe his flame, that placid dame,  
the moon's celestial highness;  
There's not a trace upon her face of diffidence or  
shyness:  
She borrows light, that, through the night,  
mankind may all acclaim her!

And, truth to tell, she lights up well; So I, for one,  
don't blame her.

Ah, pray make no mistake, we are not shy;  
We're very wide awake, the moon and I!



## Water Night

Eric Whitacre

Text: Ocatvio Paz, translated by Muriel Rukeyser

Night with the eyes  
Of a horse that trembles in the night  
Night with eyes of water  
In the field asleep is in your eyes  
A horse that trembles is in  
Your eyes of secret water.  
Eyes of shadow-water,  
Eyes of well-water,  
Eyes of dream-water.

Silence and solitude,  
Two little animals moon-led,  
Drink in your eyes,  
Drink in those waters.  
If you open your eyes, night opens doors of musk,  
The secret kingdom of the water opens  
Flowing from the center of the night.  
And if you close your eyes,  
A river, a silent and beautiful current,  
fills you from within  
Flows forward, darkens you  
Night brings its wetness to beaches in your soul



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## PHOENIX CHORALE

The multiple Grammy Award-winning Phoenix Chorale, based in Arizona, is regarded as one of North America's leading professional choirs.

Founded in 1958, the Chorale's mission is to nurture and amplify the strength and resonance of Arizona's choral artistry. All professional artists who sing in the Chorale live in the state, many of whom teach voice and direct music activities in Phoenix metro-area schools and community colleges and have studied in the state's strong collegiate choral programs.

Phoenix Chorale typically present four concert experiences each season between October and May in the Phoenix Metro Area, with musical works spanning five centuries including composers, poets, and lyricists from across the globe and representing creative artists of all genders, creeds, and colors. The music and words we share aim to resonate personally in some way within each listener, whether they join us live in the room or through our recordings and videos.

The Chorale has a strong history of recording, releasing a seminal album celebrating the work of former composer-in-residence Ola Gjeilo as well as recordings focusing on Rheinberger, Rachmaninov, and Grechaninov.



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Since 2019, Phoenix Chorale has been artistically led by Christopher Gabbitas, formerly of The King's Singers.

Visit phoenixchorale.org to learn more information about the Chorale and our upcoming performances. Find our albums on all major streaming services and stores.

## CHRISTOPHER GABBITAS

British musician and lawyer Christopher Gabbitas has been singing in Cathedrals and Concert Halls since the age of 8, whether as a boy chorister in Rochester Cathedral, choral scholar at St John's College, Cambridge, lay clerk at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, or as a member of many of London's finest choirs. Between 2004-2018 he was a member of The King's Singers, touring globally and recording over 40 albums for which he won two Grammy Awards and was an inaugural inductee into the Gramophone Hall of Fame. Since 2019 he has been Artistic Director of Phoenix Chorale. He maintains a legal practice in England specializing in media law and creative rights protection, and lives with his wife and three daughters in a house where the music never stops.



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Lies' I Hill \*  
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Katherine Rosenfeld  
Kira Zeeman Rugen  
Sarah Smith \*  
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Jacob Verhine

**Bass:**  
Caleb French \*  
Christopher Herrera  
Joshua Hillman  
Jordan Murillo  
Jason Raetz  
David Topping

**Cello:**  
Jay Good

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\* Soloists

**Three Poems of Sara Teasdale: "Constellation",  
The Astronomer, The Sun never says** Christina Hall  
**Sing to the Moon** Sarah Smith  
**Cells, Planets** Lies' I Hill

**Underneath the Stars** Cara Loveless-Faulkner  
**The Sun whose rays are all ablaze** JJ Rafferty, Caleb French



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**Water Night** - Eric Whitacre

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**I Found Night** - Connor Koppin

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**Sing to the Moon** - Steven James Brown and Laura Mvula, arr. Laura Mvula

Steven James Brown and Laura Mvula,  
arr. Laura Mvula

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**The Sun whose rays are all ablaze** -

Sir Arthur Sullivan

Arranged by Bob Chilcott, 1993 (this rearrangement by Christopher Gabbitas 2023)

Words by W. S. Gilbert, Music by Sir Arthur Sullivan  
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**Three Poems of Sara Teasdale: "Constellation"**

- Frank Ticheli

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**Be not afraid** - John Rutter

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**There will come soft rains** - Connor Koppin

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**As torrents in summer** - Sir Edward Elgar

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**She walks in beauty** - Toby Hession

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**Little you, looking up** - Dale Trumbore

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**The Sun never says** - Dan Forrest

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**The Astronomer** - William Yanesh

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**Cells, Planets** - Erika Lloyd

arr. Vince Peterson

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**With a lily in your hand** - Eric Whitacre

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**Underneath the stars** - Kate Rusby

Arr. Jim Clements

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