

MUSIC BEFORE 1800

Louise Basbas, director

Boston Camerata

We'll Be There

American Spirituals, Black and White, 1800 - 1900

Anne Azéma, director

Joel Cohen, program creator

Anne Azéma, Camila Parias, Deborah Rentz-Moore, MaKayla McDonald,
Jordan Weatherston Pitts, Corey Dalton Hart, Phillip Bullock, Luke Scott, vocalists
Libor Dudas, keyboard; Joel Cohen, guitar; Eric Martin, fiddle; Ian Saunders, contrabass

I. Long Fever: Remembering the Victims of Sickness and War

My body rock long fever

Slave Songs of the United States, 1867

Cussetta

II. Mixture of Joy and Sorrow

Sometimes

Rescue songs, New York, 1890

Mixture of Joy and Sorrow

Revival hymns and plantation melodies, Cincinnati, 1882

Let us cheer the weary traveler

Revival hymns and plantation melodies

Weeping Mary

text: *Selection of hymns and spiritual songs*, 1833

music: African-American oral tradition

Weeping Mary

The Social Harp, Georgia, 1855

Wondrous Love

Revival hymns and plantation melodies

Captain Kidd

19th century manuscript sources

How Precious is the Name

The American Vocalist, Boston, 1849

Something New

The Revivalist, Troy, New York, 1868

My soul wants something that's new

Religious folk songs of the American negro, 1909

Something New

The Social Harp

continued, next page

This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City
Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

Please turn off cell phones. Photography and recording are not permitted.



Sunday, October 2, 2022, at 4 p.m., live at Corpus Christi Church

Sunday, October 9, 2022, at 4 p.m., online concert

III. Free at Last

The Pilgrims	text: Spiritual songs and hymns, Philadelphia, 1801 music: The Revivalist
Alas, I am born for this?	text: George Morton Horton (b. 1798) music: Pisgah, The Sacred Harp
My God delivered Daniel	<i>Revival hymns and plantation melodies</i>
Safe in the Promised Land	<i>The New Song</i> , New York, 1875
Free at last	African-American oral tradition
Pretty Home	Shaker Sister Patty Williamson, Kentucky, 1849
Roll Call	<i>The Revivalist</i> and <i>The New Song</i>

IV. Signs of judgment

Judicii signum	Spain and North Africa, 12th century
<i>The judgment shall moisten the earth with sweat of its standard. Ever enduring, behold the King shall come through the ages, sent to be here in the flesh, and judge at the end of the world.</i>	
See the signs of judgement	African-American oral tradition
The Great Day	<i>The Sacred Harp</i>
Sinner Man	African-American oral tradition
Joe Cooley's	Traditional, Irish and Irish-American
Sinner Man (reprise)	African-American oral tradition

V. Bound for Canaan's Land

Be with me	African-American oral tradition
Deal gently with thy servants	<i>The American Vocalist</i>
Shall we gather at the river	<i>The Revivalist</i>

The audience is invited to sing along the refrain with us

*Yes, we'll gather at the river,
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints at the river,
That flows by the throne of God.*

I'm just a-going over home	<i>Revival hymns and plantation melodies</i>
Weeping Pilgrim	<i>The Sacred Harp</i>

+++THE BOSTON CAMERATA
Anne Azéma, Artistic Director

WE'LL BE THERE! American Spirituals, Black and White, 1800-1900

Program Notes

Early American music has been a part of The Boston Camerata's repertoire since the beginning of our recording history. It is with a vivid interest and joy that we have, over the years, included our own North American musical heritage in our concerts and recordings, most recently in *Free America! Songs of Resistance and Rebellion*.

With this program we move in chronological time, bringing the narrative forward to about 1900, and focusing most intensely on the African American presence in the repertoire. The rewards of such work are great, but the challenges are mighty. Because of terrible social inequities and injustices, early written musical sources of Black songs, prior to the choir arrangements of the late nineteenth century, are far too few. What makes our enterprise possible are a few precious written songbooks, as well as the collaborative memory and ongoing oral tradition of the Black community, a source, then as now, of some of the deepest regenerative forces in American musical life.

What do we find as we open the books, and hear the singing of our neighbors? The mutual influences, both textual and musical, between the White and Black communities, are omnipresent, both in anecdotal ways, and on profound, existential levels. The English Protestant hymn texts sung in congregations of both ethnicities are of course a common, unifying bond. But those same verses can take on different levels of meaning on the lips of believers of color. "The Pilgrims," appearing in 1801, in the very first printed African-American, text-only songbook, contains powerful, processional images of spiritual riches, superficially hidden by an aspect of material poverty. What a resonance for the freed Blacks and former slaves who sang it in Philadelphia, sixty-four years prior to the Emancipation Proclamation!

And when that same text re-appears, this time with notated music, in 1868, in an erstwhile "White" songbook, *The Revivalist*, we note the call-and-response format, ubiquitous in revivalist camp meetings, and so typical as well of African and African-American group singing. What dimensions of such performance style are "European," and what "African"? Let the scholars argue, as we turn to the music itself, entering wholeheartedly into the deeply felt expressivity of these songs.

Similarly, the crosscurrents in the powerful spiritual, "Roll Call," seem to come from shared experiences – the military metaphors of the recently-ended Civil War – and from the interethnic "camp meeting" style in which the leader or leaders exhort the congregation to a high level of enthusiasm. Our tune this afternoon is drawn from "White" songbook *The Revivalist* of 1868, but a still-living African-American variant of it has been shared with us by the Honorable Milton Wright, whose knowledge of the Black musical heritage is unsurpassed.

The roots of some "American" songs are very ancient indeed. The text to the apocalyptic "Judicii Signum" is attributed to Saint Augustine, bishop of Numidian North Africa in the fifth century. The tune for it that we sing for you was omnipresent in Spain and Provence in the twelfth century. Astonishingly, the DNA of those poetic images, and of that melody, persist in many American spirituals about the Judgement Day, most extraordinarily perhaps in "Sinner Man," in which the melodic cell d-f-a is recombined and varied over the harmonic pattern of a Renaissance ground bass, the *passamezzo antico*. Who are the parents of this beautiful, multiracial child? Insofar as we claim citizenship in the family of man, the infant is ours. Like so much of what we perform for you today, such a song is the fruit of our common awareness of mortality, and of our common, precious, fragile humanity.

Anne Azéma and Joel Cohen, October 2021, March 2022

The Boston Camerata

The Boston Camerata occupies a unique place in the densely populated universe of European and American early music ensembles. Camerata's distinguished rank stems partly from its longevity: founded in 1954, when the field of endeavor was in its infancy, as an adjunct to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' musical instruments collection. Camerata is now one of the longest-lived groups to be vigorously functioning up to the present day.

But length of service, by itself is not sufficient to account for Camerata's preeminence, nor are its numerous international distinctions.. The Boston Camerata has achieved its eminence in large part because of its willingness to approach, with consistent success, a variety of historical repertoire from the early Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, and from many places and cultures, stretching from the Middle East to early New England, with numerous intermediate stops in Renaissance and Baroque Europe and Latin America. Directed from 1969 to 2009 by Joel Cohen, and to the present day by Anne Azéma, the Boston Camerata has continued to create, over more than a half-century of activity, a large number of performances and recorded productions including most recently *Daniel: A Medieval Masterpiece Revisited*, *Dido & Aeneas* and *Free America: Early Songs of Resistance and Rebellion*.

Anne Azéma

French-born vocalist, scholar and stage director Anne Azéma has directed The Boston Camerata since 2009. Intensely engaged since her student days with the song repertoire of the Middle Ages, she is esteemed as a charismatic solo performer. But she is also widely admired for her creative skill in building and directing complete musical productions of varied styles and periods, both for her recital programs and for larger ensemble forces (concert and stage) in Europe and the United States.

Joel Cohen, guitar, trained as a composer at Harvard University with Randall Thompson and Nadia Boulanger. Among his many awards are the Edison Prize (Netherlands), the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (France) and the Georges Longy Award (United States). He is the Music Director of the Camerata Mediterranea, an international, intercultural institute of musical exchanges, devoted to research, dialogue, and pedagogy involving the diverse musical civilizations of the Mediterranean basin, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim.

Phillip K. Bullock, baritone. One of the newest members of the Camerata, Phillip has performed roles in operas such as *Porgy & Bess*, *The Magic Flute*, and *Carmen* and has been seen in several concert performances with the National Music Festival Orchestra.

Libor Dudas, keyboard, is a regular collaborator with the Camerata. Libor has studied fortepiano with Peter Sykes and harpsichord with Darlene Catello and Edward Parmentier. He is active on the faculty of Longy School of Music of Bard College and Boston Conservatory

Corey Dalton Hart, tenor. In addition to his work with the Camerata, Corey performs with the Boston Baroque Ensemble, Renaissance Men, and The Ashmont Bach Project among others.

Eric Martin, fiddle. Along with the Camerata, Eric also has performed with ensembles including Syracuse Symphony, Orchestra of the Southern Fingerlakes, and the Irish Chamber Orchestra among many others.

MaKayla McDonald, soprano. A new collaborator with the Camerata, MaKayla has worked with the American Opera Project + New York University/Titsch, and with Butler University's Jordan College of the Arts. She holds a MM from the University of Northern Iowa.

Camila Parias, soprano. Camila is a regular collaborator with Camerata most recently performing in the much acclaimed *Daniel: A Medieval Masterpeice*. She can be heard on several Camerata CDs including *Free America!* and *A Medieval Christmas-Hodie Christus Natus Est*.

Jordan Weatherston Pitts, tenor. A regular collaborator to the Camerata since 2014, he assumed prominent roles in the Camerata's *Play of Daniel*, and *The Night's Tale*. Jordan made was recently noted as the queen Renata in Iain Bell and Marks Campbell's world premiere of *Stonewall* with New York City Opera.

Deborah Rentz-Moore, mezzo soprano, is a long time perform with the Camerata. She is featured in video with The Boston Camerata, Voices of Music, Emmanuel Music and the University of New Hampshire, where she is a Resident Artist. Deborah solos on the Camerata's acclaimed *Free America!* recording and the new release, *Hodie Christus Natus Est*.

Ian Saunders, bassist. In addition to the Boston Camerata, Ian has performed with the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra and The Sphinx Symphony. In 2017, he won a prestigious diversity fellowship position with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

Luke Scott, bass-baritone. A frequent performer with the Camerata, he will be seen as Aeneas in the upcoming *Dido & Aeneas*. Luke's credits also include performances with Opera on the Avalon, Salt March Opera, and the Boston Opera Collective among others.

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