Sacred and secular, familiar favorites and adventurous new works. These words best describe the Sooke Philharmonic Chamber Players and Chorus’ concert *Songs and Psalms*, to be performed April 6 and 7, under the direction of Nicholas Fairbank.

Featured are performances of Bernstein’s *Chichester Psalms*, Mendelssohn’s *Hear my Prayer*, Fairbank’s original composition *Canción Amazónica, and* Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Waltzes*

“I wanted to offer audiences an easy listening program that will appeal to a variety of musical tastes”, noted Fairbank *Songs and Psalms* includes shorter works that range from upbeat and joyful, to meditative and soulful. “The program showcases the full range of abilities of the Sooke Philharmonic Chamber Players and Chorus” added Fairbank.

Leonard Bernstein’s musically challenging 1965 composition *Chichester Psalms* features fresh edgy rhythms delivered by percussion, brass and strings, with a pivotal role for the harp. The chorus sings Old Testament Psalms in Hebrew with guest soloist countertenor, Gary Sun.

*Hear my Prayer, Oh God, incline thine ear!* is one ofFelix Mendelssohn’s most popular and widely known works, composed in 1844. Based on the text of Psalm 55, the work is sung in English and features guest soprano soloist Nancy Washeim.

*Canción Amazónica* or Song of the Amazon was inspired by a visit Nicholas Fairbank made to the town of Pucallpa, on a tributary of the Amazon River. Sung mostly in Spanish, the texts are based on poetry and prose of local writers from the region. Fairbank’s original score reflects regional musical themes and melodies from the region. There are 5 movements. As a unique twist, Fairbank has included as the first and last movements recordings of songs of Welcome and Farewell, performed for him by locals in the region.

The program ends with Johannes Brahms’ *Liebeslieder Waltzes,* a collection of relatively short movements that encompass a variety of emotions and moods. Composed in 1888, these Waltzes were initially performed with piano accompaniment in parlors and informal home gatherings and helped solidify Brahms’ reputation in Vienna and Europe.

Guest soloist Gary Sun, born in Taiwan, performs regularly as a violist and a countertenor in Vancouver and Victoria, conducts chamber groups and string orchestras, and is a dedicated Taiwanese pop-music arranger and songwriter. As a countertenor, he was awarded the 1st Prize in the 2015-16 Capilano University Scholarship Competition and is currently studying at the Victoria Conservatory.

Sooke resident, soprano Nancy Washeim’s international and national career has featured solo performances with a wide range of musical organizations. The crystalline purity and expressiveness of her voice has been described as “a joy at all times”.

*Songs and Psalms* concert schedule

Saturday April 6, 2019 7:30 pm

Sooke Community Hall

2017 Shields Road, Sooke

Sunday April 7, 2019 2:30 PM

Quarterdeck Ballroom

Royal Roads University

2005 Sooke Road, Colwood

Tickets available on line at Sookephil.ca OR in Sooke at the Little Vienna Bakery, Shoppers Drug Mart and South Shore Gallery and in Westshore at the Royal Bay Bakery and Shoppers Drug Mart in Westshore Town Center.

Tickets $25 adults, $20 seniors and students. Free admission for youth 18 and younger.