

# THE LESSON OF THE LARK

*by Jeffrey Cobb*

*based on the book by Laura Knight Cobb*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2020 – 7:00PM

*featuring:*

Laura Osgood Brown

Laura Knight Cobb

Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden

The Northwestern Michigan College Choirs

## ~ PROGRAM ~

### I. THE PROMISE

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Laura Osgood Brown, The Lark;  
Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden, The Girl; Northwestern Michigan College Choirs*

A girl peered into Seneca's garden,  
A lark sweetly sang: "Where have you been?"  
A locked iron gate stood before her,  
"I'm here to lift mankind – let me in."

The girl hoisted her starched-white petticoat.  
She'd been summoned and given a light.  
"Please open this gate,"  
"I'm here to bring change – make things right."

The lark then eyed a gardener  
Who was planting his seeds with great pride.  
"To enter, a promise must be made:  
Teach others – their conscience is their guide."

The gardener gave a wink of assurance,  
Wiped his brow, for the time had arrived.  
He lifted a bent key from his pocket,  
Held her elbow, and led her inside.

## II. THE GARDEN

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Laura Osgood Brown, The Lark;  
Nancy Stagnitta, flute; Northwestern Michigan College Choirs*

As her mud-caked boots passed the threshold  
The girl glowed a magnificent hue;  
Enchanted by fragrant blossoms, and vines,  
Her cheeks misted by waterfall's dew.

The gardener's eyes widened gleefully.  
His blissful smile held secrets divine.  
He knew she would lead a movement,  
Cradled by hands of master design.

The gardener pointed 'round joyfully.  
He giggled with earnest delight.  
The lark fluttered to perch on his finger.  
Stroking her feathers, he spoke with insight:

"You see; freewill is the way to enlightenment.  
Like the lark, if held too tight,  
Will be crushed in the fear of losing  
And a cage only robs it of flight."

"Humanity longs for acceptance  
Like a child who is lost in the night.  
Cynics weaken faith's purpose,  
And dark shadows blur one's true sight."

"The lark was chosen for her sweetest of songs,  
Her melodies – cheerful and bright.  
Her message, to be heard and remembered –  
Live together as one, in the light."

## III. THE DECLARATION

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden, The Girl;  
Laurie Sears, alto saxophone; Phil Tarczon, guitar*

Then, interrupted by a gathering crowd –  
Curious bystanders who puzzled with wonder.  
They marveled to witness this epic event,  
For divinity and grace swept them under.

She addressed her new allies with confidence,  
Cleared her throat to decisively declare:  
"The entitlements of men over women  
Are privileges which simply aren't fair."

“We too, are beings with keen intellect –  
Filled with knowledge, contributions, and gifts.  
Each one with a divine purpose to fulfill;  
Our liberty can no longer be dismissed.”

“Our blood runs more patient and caring;  
Our tears more humanely flow.  
Our compassion and forgiveness, more willing;  
We have seeds of morality to sow.”

She remembered her sacred promise.  
A revolution began on that day.  
Her voice, sure and firm, was persuading:  
“With pride, we declare equal say.”

“We shall lift up the world with our voices.  
We will build dreams of peace and goodwill.  
Together, we’ll prove ourselves worthy –  
A needed balance will then be fulfilled.”

## IV. THE TRANSFORMATION

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Laura Osgood Brown, The Lark;  
Andy Evans, bass; Laurie Sears, alto saxophone*

The lark’s calls quickened in rhythm.  
Soon the garden was filled with grand splendors –  
As the young and old stood proudly together,  
They transformed into freedom’s defenders.

Hand in hand, they gathered in more closely,  
As the songbird sang hymns of elation.  
The crowd listened as her insights were shared,  
The Lark’s Lesson – a dream for liberation.

“No longer shall your words be rejected.  
No longer obedient, dutiful, and meek.  
Now you must grow sharp thorns of protection –  
Like yellow roses: be powerful and unique.”

“With honor, you’ll expand this endeavor.  
With fortitude, you’ll govern with love.  
With defiance, your reforms will take root,  
For freedom’s light radiates from above.”

“Your will, now too strong to be broken,  
Was birthed in your grandmother’s whispers.  
The world is in need of your insights –  
Now, awaken this charge for all sisters.”

“Make a Declaration of Sentiments.  
Follow leaders: Anthony, Stanton, and Stone.  
Spread seeds of wisdom and enlightenment,  
So a generation of hope can be grown.”

“Hasten quickly, to your churches and school yards,  
Beyond rivers and mountains that divide.  
Build bridges, not walls, to proclaim your rights.  
Be empathetic and persistent with pride.”

Then the lark took flight in the east wind.  
The gardener grinned and nodded her way.  
The crowd marched forward to begin this crusade,  
For there was no time left for delay.

## V. THE SACRIFICE

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Dorothy Vogel, piano*

Yet their message was received with great malice;  
Violent fury brewed frenzied alarms.  
Swift tempers spread rage of contempt and disdain,  
Intimidation left women disarmed.

Squalls of hate stormed about in foolish pride,  
Clouded by exploitation and power.  
Thunder deafened those who dared to defy,  
Domination and chauvinism devoured.

Ever clear in their pursuit for fairness,  
Through years of condemning disputes,  
The Silent Sentinels endured harsh realities  
Of women’s restrictions, sufferings, and abuse.

Upon wings of faith, soaring ever higher,  
Wives and sisters prevailed day and night.  
They stood firm through bitter gales with blistered palms,  
Holding banners of white-purple-gold ever tight.

Resilient in their sacred vigil,  
Renegades with a purpose to embrace –  
No word was ever spoken,  
They were adorned by hidden grace.

Yet, their efforts were chastised, scorned, and mocked;  
Arrogance created torrents of despair.  
Relentless abuse from their vicious assaults  
Captured the lark in the fowler’s snares.

A courageous sacrifice for parity –  
Yet they continued to mock, berate and beat.  
Her wings were crushed by brutality and wrath –  
She lay dead, broken-hearted, at their feet!

## VI. THE REFLECTION

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Laurie Sears, tenor saxophone;  
Northwestern Michigan College Choirs*

Then the gardener reappeared with great sorrow,  
His face wrinkled by thousands of suns.  
Weeping great tears for this tragedy,  
He uttered, "Don't you see what your fears have done?"

"The horrors of anger and resentment  
And other tortures and nightmares we create,  
Are redeemed in the seedlings of tolerance  
And sprout forth beyond the garden's gate."

"So, who of you, have been hearers and seers  
And have done nothing to make things just?  
Look deep into your own reflection –  
Do you see someone worthy of trust?"

"Are you ready to change your perspective?  
Liberty's blessings we all deserve.  
You can right this wrong, and amend it –  
Claim your voice, seek new laws, and preserve."

"A century from now, you'll be remembered;  
The future will embrace this new way.  
Still more changes are yet to be considered –  
Race, color, and faith will too have their say."

"No doubt, opinions will always differ –  
Keep the Golden Rule true, I implore.  
Remember the love of the light from above;  
Live as equals in harmony evermore."

## VII. THE SEED

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden, The Girl;  
Mike Hunter, trombone; Josh Wagner, trumpet; Northwestern Michigan College Choirs*

Then the gardener brushed the dirt from his knees  
As he offered a silent prayer.  
With a heavy sigh he faced westerly –  
Other gardens needed tending elsewhere.

He knew then his promise had been realized,  
And gently handed the girl his last seed.  
She clutched it close to her heart and sighed,  
Its safety was now guaranteed.

“This seed is today but an acorn;  
With enough faith it will grow to great height.  
The mightiest of mountains can be moved,  
If the vision of morality is in sight.”

“The lark is the messenger of mercy.  
She has left us an endowment – her fairest.”  
He pointed up toward a mighty oak –  
In its branches, a symbol to be cherished.

All eyes then peered slowly upward.  
They stood in awe of what lay in her nest.  
Three golden eggs resting safely –  
Hope, faith and love – her vow manifest.

“So, move forward with nurturing patience.  
Your daughters will light the way.  
Listen carefully to what they will teach you,  
For their insights call forth a new day.”

“Please, I beg you, remember the lark’s message –  
A song of peace meant for everyone.  
Bountiful grace and virtue are before us –  
Soar together with loving hearts as one.”

## VIII. THE LESSON

*featuring: Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator; Laura Osgood Brown, The Lark;  
Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden, The Girl; Northwestern Michigan College Choirs*

His shadow vanished ever so slowly  
As he reached the horizon’s edge.  
A new beginning for humanity –  
They’d unite in equality’s pledge.

Together, ascending to higher ideals,  
They sought compromise and fair accord.  
With grateful hearts and pure intent,  
Integrity had now been restored.

Yesterday's tomorrows are now before us,  
A century of sisters stand eternally strong.  
Listen – for the song carried faintly on the wind –  
The Lesson of the Lark calls us all to belong...

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Yesterday's tomorrows are now before us;  
A century of sisters now stands strong.  
Listen for the song carried faintly on the wind:  
The Lesson of the Lark, calls us all to belong.

Please remember the Lark's special message;  
A song of peace that's meant for all.  
Bountiful grace and virtue before us;  
Soar together as one.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come.  
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.  
Amazing grace how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I am found!

The Lesson of the Lark: sing hymns of elation.  
The Lesson of the Lark: a dream for liberation.  
The Lesson of the Lark, calls us all to belong.

## ~ **THANK YOU'S** ~

*your support helped make this project possible*

Nick Nissley, President Northwestern Michigan College – for your leadership and your support of all of our artistic endeavors at NMC

Marguerite Cotto, Vice President, Northwestern Michigan College – for your counsel, artistic vision, and unwavering support

Caroline Schaefer-Hills – for your artistic vision and leadership in guiding your Visual Communications students through this collaborative journey

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Mike Hunter – for your insight, input, and support during the composing phase of this project

Mary Ann Niesen – for your help in making sure all of our NMC singers could connect with us virtually

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*your financial gifts have helped bring this project to life*

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~ **PERSONNEL** ~

Jeffrey Cobb, Director

Laura Osgood Brown, The Lark  
Laura Knight Cobb, The Narrator  
Kaylen Wheeler-Gooden, The Girl

## The Northwestern Michigan College Choirs

### SOPRANO 1

Wendy Becker  
Sara Boys  
Sage Campbell  
Julie Falls  
Marissa Hammond  
Nancy Hewitt  
Barbara Hoig  
Stephanie Jones  
Keagan Kalbfleisch  
Mary Kiner  
Trisha Neff  
Claire Olinik  
Susan Roskelley  
Hunter Shelton  
Cheryl Staats  
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### SOPRANO 2

Carrie Berkompas  
Susan Cobb  
Maureen Delaney-  
Lehman  
Katherine Grzesiak  
Emma Kelly  
Jennifer McCain  
Claire Olinik  
Betsy Taylor

### ALTO

Carol Bosche  
Susan Chrostek  
Amy Colombo  
Diane Emling  
Nan Horstman  
Margaret Hunter  
Ann Isola  
Carol Johnson  
Linda Joppich  
Lynn McAndrews  
Carleen McCall  
Kristin Moore  
Mary Ann Niesen  
Claire Olinik  
Susan Steele  
Priscilla Walmsley

### TENOR

Mark Andrews  
David Husser  
Richard Scott  
Ann Snyder  
Noah Steinorth  
Larry Winegar

### BASS

Mark Becker  
Roger Brummel  
Jeffrey Buday  
Dave Chrostek  
Bruce Moore  
John Niesen  
Aaron Rossan  
Lyndon Salathiel  
Eric Saunders  
Steve Weldon

## Orchestra

### Flute

Nancy Stagnitta

### Baritone Saxophone

Laurie Sears

### Trombone 2

Mike Hunter

### Piano

Dorothy Vogel

### Clarinet

Andrew Sprung

### Trumpet 1

Josh Wagner

### Trombone 3

Mike Hunter

### Guitar

Phil Tarczon

### Alto Saxophone 1

Laurie Sears

### Trumpet 2

Josh Wagner

### Bass Trombone

Mike Hunter

### Double Bass

Andy Evans

### Alto Saxophone 2

Laurie Sears

### Trumpet 3

Josh Wagner

### Violin 1

Paul Sonner

### Drums

Will Harris

### Tenor Saxophone 1

Laurie Sears

### Trumpet 4

Josh Wagner

### Violin 2

Steven Leonard

### Percussion

(Movement VII)  
Robert Mulligan

### Tenor Saxophone 2

Laurie Sears

### Horn

Robert Pavelek

### Viola

Kim Teachout

### Trombone 1

Mike Hunter

### Violoncello

Crispin Campbell

~ **“THE LESSON OF THE LARK” – VIRTUAL PERFORMANCE** ~

**PRODUCER**

Jeffrey Cobb  
Director of Music Programs, Northwestern Michigan College

**AUDIO PRODUCTION**

**Director**

Jeffrey Cobb

**Audio Engineer, Mixing, and Mastering**

Jack Conners  
Owner, Perfect World Studios

**NMC Audio Tech Student Assistants**

Topher Busch  
Jack Warner

**VIDEO PRODUCTION**

**Art Director, Editing Master**

Caroline Schaefer-Hills  
Visual Communication Program Director, Northwestern Michigan College

**Video Editor, Motion Graphics**

Movement I. The Promise – Gavin Hanna

Movement II. The Garden – Gabrielle Edgcombe

Movement III. The Declaration – Caroline Schaefer-Hills

Movement IV. The Transformation – Kam Williams

Movement V. The Sacrifice – Caroline Schaefer-Hills

Movement VI. The Reflection – Landon Hernandez

Movement VII. The Seed – Gabrielle Edgcombe

Movement VIII. The Lesson – Dom La Pres

Title and End Credits – Aly Walters

***for more information, please visit: [TheLessonOfTheLark.com](http://TheLessonOfTheLark.com)***