

# Path of Miracles



**Christopher Windle**  
Artistic & Music Director



# WELCOME

Welcome and thank you for joining us tonight!

What a thrilling 51st season it has been for WFC! December began with a haunting performance of David Lang's *the little match girl passion*, accompanied by works that spoke to themes of gathering and community during the holiday season. February 24th saw over 230 excited audience members at St. James Cathedral for an evening filled with the sounds and music of some of Chicago's most exciting composers writing choral music today, including a premiere by Augusta Read Thomas, work by Ayanna Woods and emerging local composer Gabirel Novak. February also saw the public launch of Emerging Voices, WFC's educational initiative that brought audiences the premiere performance of *To Feel*, written by Adore Alexander and our student artists from Lake View High School.

Watching WFC artists sing alongside these student artists was a joy, and I continue to return to a quote shared by one student following the performance: 'I had no clue I could make music like that, and use my voice to sing alongside others like we did. It's cool to know I can keep following music and singing after high school, like the WFC singers!'

Tonight's performance of Joby Talbot's *Path of Miracles* is sure to elicit a similar response. The crux of this thrilling work for vocalists and percussion centers around a journey toward something greater than oneself. I like to think that the work of Chris and our brilliant artists is not so different from a pilgrimage toward something greater, sharing music that inspires, transcends, and more.

If musical experiences like tonight, and the virtuosic music shared by our artists transport you someplace beyond the walls of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, I hope you'll consider a donation to WFC as we look toward our 52nd season. We cannot wait to keep sharing inspired performances like tonight with you next season.

Thank you for joining us!  
Justin Berkowitz  
Executive Director

# PROGRAM

## **Path of Miracles - Joby Talbot (b. 1971)**

1. Roncesvalles
2. Burgos
3. Leon
4. Santiago

## **FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

This work is one I have wanted to explore – musically and personally – for many years. I find it to be a profoundly moving, and deeply spiritual piece. It's dramatic, but direct in its expression. And it asks the listener to both reflect and join us on the journey.

I invite you to read the program and follow the text, but I believe it will be equally impactful to sit and simply experience the music with us.

This is a piece that talks about "thin places" – places where heaven and Earth connect, or even collide. We journey together to these places tonight. We encounter "Rumours of grace on the road," and know together that "Here is a miracle. That we are here is a miracle."

Join us as we " [walk] out of our lives / To come to where the walls of heaven / Are thin as a curtain, transparent as glass ...".



# NOTE

The world's most enduring route of Catholic pilgrimage was first formally acknowledged as such by Bishop Diego Gelmirez in the early 12th Century, but it has always belonged to a wider fellowship even than the Catholic church. Long before the body of St James was discovered in Iria Flavia in the early 9th Century, and brought to its final resting place in Santiago; before the Saint even began his life of service, first as an apostle, and later as a preacher in Spain, the 'Camino Frances' was under construction. Part of the route still runs along the sturdy Roman roads which were used to subdue and colonise northern Iberia. To the pre-Christians, this road followed the path of the Milky Way, and took its travellers to the end of the earth. Centuries later, it was used by the Moors to reach Spain's northern outposts, only to be pushed back along it by Charlemagne, and served as an arterial route for the establishment of the Roman Rite and the purging of its Hispanic predecessor. Today it is used by tourists, travellers and explorers, as well as by confirmed Catholics and the spiritually curious.

The musical traditions of the Pilgrimage can be traced to the mid-12th Century, when a compilation of texts attributed to Pope Calixtus II was created, all devoted to the cult of St James. This so-called 'Codex Calixtinus' was specifically designed to serve the needs of worshippers and pilgrims in Santiago, and consisted of five books. The first volume contains liturgical settings, including those for the two feast days devoted to St James: the Feast of the Passion of St James on the 25th of July, and the Feast of Translation of the Apostles remains on the 30th of December. The second and third volumes describe the 22 miracles of St James and the journey of the Saint's body to Santiago. Book Four recounts Charlemagne's defeat of the Moors in Spain, and the final volume leads the would-be pilgrim through the routes, dangers and customs of the pilgrimage. Of comparable importance to all this is an appendix which contains music composed using a technique which was just beginning to gain a foothold in certain parts of Europe at this time. Notwithstanding the fact that it rarely uses more than two voices, this is a highly significant collection of polyphony. And here, within this final section of the Codex, can be found the most famous of Jacobean chants - the Dum Pater Familias. It is this hymn which establishes the

universality of the cult of St James, interspersing latin verses in praise of the Saint with a multilingual refrain representing the many languages heard on the road to his shrine:

*Herr Santiago, Grot Santiago, Eultreya esuseya, Deus aia nos.*

The 'Camino Frances' is the central axis of a network of pilgrimage routes to Santiago. Its travellers gather in Roncesvalles, a small town at the foot of the Pyrenees which in the spring becomes a veritable Babel as pilgrims from across the world assemble, before setting off in a southwesterly direction. The pilgrims carry a special passport - often this is one of the only possessions not discarded on the journey - and engage in the 850 - year - old tradition of following the yellow arrows and seeking out the images of shells placed over pilgrim - friendly boarding houses. On the way, they stop off at any of a large number of shrines, most important among which are the cathedrals of Burgos and Leon, and at the foot of an iron cross near Astorga they may cast a stone from their homeland. The road takes them across the desert lands between Burgos and Leon and the rainy, hilly terrain of Galicia: and as the landscape transforms, so does the pilgrim. A pilgrim writes:

*You have left behind the life you lived before... Dates become meaningless; a day is merely the passing of the sun from one hand to the other, from behind you to in front... Then you slough off your worries. There is only one thing to worry about now and that is whether you and your feet will last the day.*

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Somewhere between 50 and 200 thousand people arrive at the gates of Santiago's Cathedral each year, at least eighty percent of them on foot. A good number of these continue on to Capo di Finisterre, a further 85 kilometres to the west, to reach what Europeans pre-Columbus considered to be the end of all westward journeys. An item of clothing is placed on a beach-fire to symbolise the old life left behind.

The four movements of Path of Miracles are titled with the names of the four main staging posts of the Camino Frances, though the textual themes within the movements extend beyond the mere geographical. Throughout the work, quotations from various mediaeval texts (principally the Codex Calixtinus and a



15th Century work in the Galician language - *Miragres de Santiago*) are woven together with passages from the Roman liturgy, and lines of poetry from Robert Dickinson, the work's librettist. Talbot introduces his work with a vocal effect based on the Bunun aboriginal 'Pasiputput' from Taiwan, in which low voices rise in volume and pitch over an extended period, creating random overtones as the voices move into different pitches at fluctuating rates. After a dramatic exclamation of the pilgrim's hymn from *Dum Pater Familias*, the beheading of St James by the sword of King Herod is briefly described in Greek, Latin, Spanish, Basque, French, English and German, initially sung by a lone countertenor rising above the choir's sustained chord clusters. An account of the discovery of the Saint's body in Compostella follows, some eight hundred years after his death in Jerusalem and the subsequent translation of his body on a rudderless boat made of stone.

The insistent discords of the second movement reflect both the hardships of the road, keenly felt by this time after some initial euphoria in Roncesvalles, and the composer's own sense of discomfort on visiting Burgos. The music trudges uneasily through this most awkward part of the journey, stopping regularly to recover breath and ease feet. There are stern warnings of human mischief and inhuman devilry, interspersed with musings on the mystical nature of the Saint's translation. Robbery, lynching and illness are the least of a pilgrim's problems; for just as the Saint can take the form of a pilgrim, so can the devil himself take the form of a Saint. As the laments and the warnings subside, the movement concludes with a line from Psalm 61, delivered in desolate, motionless tones from the lower voices: 'A finibus terrae ad te clamavi' — From the end of the earth I cry to you.

Joby Talbot describes the third movement as a 'Lux Aeterna'; and like the interior of the magnificent Cathedral of Leon, it is bathed in light. The journey is more than half complete, the pain barrier has been crossed and the pilgrim's worries have indeed been sloughed off. A medieval French refrain, an ode to the sun in the key of C minor, punctuates simple observations of land traversed and hardships overcome. As with the previous movement, there is a steady, almost hypnotic walking pulse, but the steps have lost their heaviness. By the end of the movement the verses have arrived in the relative major, fused with the refrain which retains its original key. Mystical events are again spoken of, but this time with no sense of danger. Even the relentless sun, though it may dazzle, does not burn.

Meanwhile in Galicia the temperature cools, the altitude rises and the rain falls. Towns pass by like shadows as the road seems to climb and climb, though Leon's contented mood lingers. There seems no doubt that the journey will end, and at the first sight of Santiago, miles down from the summit of Monte de Gozo, the music initially draws inward, before bursting out in an explosion of joy. The pilgrim's hymn is heard again, performed with the reverence and reflection of one who has finished such a long journey, and is quickly transformed into a spring revel from the Carmina Burana.

Path of Miracles, like so many pilgrimages, does not finish in Santiago. The journey to Finisterre, to where the walls of heaven are thin as a curtain, has a reflective, epilogic tone, a benign hangover from the party in Santiago. Here the pilgrim's hymn is heard for a final time, now in English, endlessly repeating and disappearing over the horizon.

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# TEXTS 01

## Ro n cesva lles

*Herr Santiago Grot Sanctiagu Eultreya esuseya Deus aia nos.*  
(Holy St. James Great St. James God helps us now and evermore.)

κατ εκείνον δε τον καιρον επεβαλεν ηρωδης ο βασιλευς τας χειρας κακωσαι τινας των απο της εκκλησιας ανειλεν δε ιακωβον τον αδελφον ιωαννου μαχαιρα

(James, son of Zebedee, brother of John, at that time preached in Spain and the Western places. –*Breviarium apostolorum*, 8th century  
He was the first to preach in Galicia. –*Miragres de Santiago*)

Eodem autore tempore misit Herodes rex manus ut adfligeret quosdam de ecclesia occidit autem Iacobum fratrem Iohannis gladio.

En aquel mismo tiempo el rey Herodes echó mano a algunos de la iglesia para maltratarles. Y mató a espada a Jacobo, hermano de Juan.

Aldi hartan, Herodes erregea eliz elkarteko batzuei gogor erasotzen hasi zen. Santiago, Joanen anaia, ezpataz hilarazi zuen.

Ver ce temps-là, le roi Hérode se mit à persécuter quelques-un de membres de l'Église. Il fit mourir par l'épée Jacques, frère de Jean.

Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

Um dieselbige Zeit legte der König Herodes die Hände an, etliche von der Gemeinde, sie zu peinigen. Er tötete aber Jakobus, den Bruder des Johannes, mit dem Schwert.



Before this death the Apostle journeyed,  
/ preaching the word to unbelievers.  
Returning, unheeded, / to die in Jerusalem

–  
a truth beyond Gospel.

*Jacobus, filius Zebedaei, frate Johannis, Hic  
Spaniae et occidentalia loca praedicat, foy  
el o primeiro que preegou en Galizia.*

Herod rots on a borrowed throne,  
while the saint is translated / to Heaven  
and Spain,  
the body taken at night from the tomb,  
the stone of the tomb becoming the boat  
that carries him back ad extremis terrarum,  
back to the land that denied him in life.

*Huius beatissimi apostoli  
sacra ossa ad Hispanias translata;*

*Et despois que o rrey Eroles mādou matar  
en Iherusalem, trouxerō o corpo del os  
diçipolos por mar a Galiz.*

(After King Herod killed him in Jerusalem,  
his disciples took the body by sea to  
Galicia.)

From Jerusalem to Finisterre, / from the  
heart of the world  
to the end of the land / in a boat made of  
stone,  
without rudder or sail. / Guided by grace to  
the Galician shore.

*abandonnant à la Providence la soin de la  
sepulture.*

(Abandoning to Providence the care of the  
tomb. –*Legenda* (Fr.))

O ajutor omnium seculorum, / O decus  
apostolorum,  
O lus clara galicianorum, / O avocate  
peregrinorum,

Jacobe, suplantatur viciorum / Solve  
nostrum  
Cathenes delitorum / E duc a salutem  
portum.

O judge of all the world, / O glory of the  
apostles,  
O clear light of Galicia, / O defender of  
pilgrims,  
James, destroyer of sins, / deliver us from  
evil and lead us to safe harbour.

At night on Lebredon / by Iria Flavia  
the hermit Pelayo / at prayer and alone  
saw in the heavens / a ring of bright stars  
shining like beacons / over the plain  
and as in Bethlehem / the Magi were  
guided

the hermit was led / by this holy sign  
for this was the time / given to Spain  
for St. James to be found / after eight  
hundred years  
in Compostella, by the field of stars.

*Herr Santiagu  
Grot Sanctiagu  
Eultreya esuseya  
Delius aia nos*



# 02

## Burgos

Innkeepers cheat us, the English steal,  
The devil waits at the side of the road.  
We trust in words and remnants, prayers  
and bones.

We know that the world is a lesson  
As the carved apostles in the Puerta Alta  
Dividing the damned and the saved are a  
lesson.

We beat our hands against the walls of  
heaven.

St. Julian of Cuenca, / Santa Casilda, pray  
for us.

Remember the pilgrim robbed in  
Pamplona,

Cheated of silver the night his wife died;  
Remember the son of the German pilgrim  
Hanged as a thief at the gates of the town,  
Hanged at the word of an innkeeper's  
daughter.

Innkeepers cheat us, the English steal,  
The devil waits at the side of the road.  
We trust in words and remnants, prayers  
and bones.

*Santiago Peregrino:*

His arm is in England, his jaw in Italy, / And  
yet he works wonders.

The widower, the boy on the gallows – /  
He did not fail them.

One given a horse on the road by a  
stranger,

One kept alive for twenty-six days,  
Unhurt on a gallows for twenty-six days,  
His jaw is in Italy, yet he speaks.

The widower robbed in Pamplona: Told by

the Saint how the thief  
Fell from the roof of a house to his death.

His arm is in England, yet the boy,  
The pilgrim's son they hanged in Toulouse  
Was borne on the gallows for twenty-six  
days  
And called to his father: Do not mourn,  
For all this time the Saint has been with me.

*O beate Jacobe.*

Innkeepers cheat us, the English steal.  
We are sick of body, worthy of hell.

The apostles in the Puerta Alta / Have  
seen a thousand wonders;  
The stone floor is worn with tears, / With  
ecstasies and lamentations.  
We beat our hands against the walls of  
heaven.

*Santiago Peregrino:*

The devil waits in a turn in the wind / In a  
closing door in an empty room.  
A voice at night, a waking dream.

Traveller, be wary of strangers,  
Sometimes the Saint takes the form of a  
pilgrim,  
Sometimes the devil the form of a saint.  
Pray to the Saints and the Virgen del  
Camino,  
To save you as she saved the man from  
Lyon  
Who was tricked on the road by the  
deceiver,  
Tricked by the devil in the form of St. James  
And who killed himself from fear of hell;

The devil cried out and claimed his soul.  
Weeping, his companions prayed.  
Saint and Virgin heard the prayer  
And turned his wound into a scar,  
From mercy they gave the dead man life.

Innkeepers cheat us, the English steal, /  
We are sick of body, worthy of hell.  
We beat our hands against the walls of  
heaven / And are not heard.  
We pray for miracles and are given stories;  
/ Bread, and are given stones.  
We write our sins on parchment / To cast  
upon his shrine  
In hope they will burn.

We pray to St. Julian of Cuenca, / To St.  
Amaro the Pilgrim,  
To Santa Casilda, / To San Millan and the  
Virgin of the Road.  
We pray to Santiago.

We know that the world is a lesson / As the  
carved apostles in the Puerta Alta  
Dividing the damned and the saved are a  
lesson.  
We pray the watching saints will help us  
learn.

*Ora pro nobis, Jacobe,  
A finibus terrae ad te clamavi.*  
(From the end of the earth I cry to you. –  
Psalm 61)

## 03 Leon

*Li soleus qui en moi luist est mes deduis,  
Et Dieus est mon conduis.*  
(The sun that shines within me is my joy,  
and God is my guide. –Anon, 13th cen.)

We have walked / In Jakobsländ:  
Over river and sheep track, / By hospice  
and hermit's cave.

We sleep on the earth and dream of the  
road,  
We wake to the road and we walk.

Wind from the hills / Dry as the road,  
Sun overhead, / Too bright for the  
eye.

*Li soleus qui en moi luist est mes deduis,  
Et Dieus est mon conduis.*  
(The sun that shines within me is my joy,  
and God is my guide. –Anon, 13th century)

Rumours of grace on the road, / Of  
wonders:  
The miracles of Villasirga, / The Virgin in  
the apple tree.  
The Apostle on horseback – / A journey of  
days in one night.  
God knows we have walked / In  
Jakobsländ:  
Through the Gothic Fields, / From  
Castrogeriz to Calzadilla,  
Calzadilla to Sahagun, / Each day the  
same road, the same sun.



# 04

## Santiago

*Quam dilecta tabernacula tua, Dominum  
vi r tu te m.*

(How admirable are thy tabernacles, O Lord  
of Hosts. –Psalm 84)

Here is a miracle. / That we are here is a  
miracle.

Here daylight gives an image of / The  
heaven promised by His love.

*Beate, qui habitant in domo tua, Domine;  
In saecula saeculorum laudabant te.*

(Blessed are they that dwell in thy house;  
they will still be praising be. –Psalm 84)

We pause, as at the heart of a sun / That  
dazzles and does not burn.

The road climbs through changing land.  
Northern rains fall / On the deepening  
green of the slopes of the valley,  
Storms break the summer's heat;  
At Foncebadon a pass can be lost, / In one  
night, to the snow.

The road climbs for days through the  
highlands / of Bierzo,  
to the grassland and rocks / of the  
Valcarce valley.

White broom and scrub-oak, / Laburnum  
and gorse

Mark the bare hills / Beside the road.

At O Cebreiro, mountains.

The road follows the ridgetop / By  
meadows of fern, by fields of rye.

By Fonfria del Camino, by Triacastela.  
Towns are shadows / The road leaves  
behind.

It moves over the slate hills / Palas do Rei.  
Potomarin.

The names are shadows.

Then, from the stream at Lavacolla / To the  
foot of Monte de Gozo,

A morning;

From the foot of Monte de Gozo / To the  
summit of Monte de Gozo

The road climbs, / Before the longed-for  
final descent  
To Santiago.

*Herr Santiago*

*Grot Sanctiagu*

*Eultreya esuseya*

*Deius aia nos.*

Ver redit optatum / Cum gaudio,  
Flore decoratum / Purpureo;  
Aves edunt cantus / Quam dulciter,  
Cantus est amoenus / Totaliter.  
(Longed-for spring returns, with joy,  
adorned with shining flowers. The birds  
sing so sweetly, the woods burst into leaf,  
there is pleasant song on every side. –  
*Carmina Burana*)

Jacobo dat parium / Omnis mundus gratis  
Ob cuius remedium / Miles pietatis  
Cunctorum presidium / Est ad vota satis.  
(The whole world freely gives thanks to  
James; through his sacrifice, he, the warrior  
of godliness, is a great defense to all  
through their prayers. –*Dum pater familias*)

O beate Jacobe / Virtus nostra vere  
Nobis hostes remove / Tuos ac tuere  
Ac devotos adibe / Nos tibi placer  
(O blessed James, truly our strength,  
take our enemies from us and protect  
your people, and cause us, your faithful  
servants, to please you.)

Jacobo propicio / Veniam speramus  
Et quas ex obsequio / Merito debemus  
Patri tam eximio / Dignes laudes demus.  
(James, let us hope for pardon through  
your favor, and let us give the worthy  
praise, which we rightfully owe to so  
excellent a father.)

At the Western edge of the world / We  
pray for our sins to fall from us  
As chains from the limbs of penitents.

We have walked out of the lives we had /  
And will return to nothing, if we live,  
Changed by the journey, face and soul  
alike.

We have walked out of our lives  
To come to where the walls of heaven  
Are thin as a curtain, transparent as glass,  
Where the Apostle spoke the holy words,  
Where in death he returned, where God is  
close,  
Where saints and martyrs mark the road.  
Santiago, *primus ex apostolis*,  
Defender of pilgrims, warrior for truth,  
Take from our backs the burdens of this  
l i f e,

What we have done, who we have been;  
Take them as fire takes the cloth  
They cast into the sea at Finisterre.

Holy St James, great St. James  
God help us now and evermore.  
–Robert Dickinson



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