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## Wall of Mirrors - Program Note

*Wall of Mirrors* was commissioned by Harvard Glee Club and conductor Andrew Clark for their Spring 2020 concert and Midwest Concert Tour.

In conceiving the piece, Andy and I reflected on our shared hometown of Pittsburgh, PA, and decided to base the work off the life and teachings of Fred Rogers. Mr. Rogers is of course a legendary figure, and we wanted to feature his teachings on humility, kindness, and rethinking strength and masculinity, specifically in contemporary society and in writing for men's choir. I thus engaged my frequent collaborator Marco Grosse to write original text, sourcing several of Mr. Rogers's lyrics along with the *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* documentary and *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* film. Through such we hope to highlight how Mr. Rogers's teachings not only apply to children but also adults, in teaching humility, fragility, and humanity.

From Marco Grosse:

Memories can be very tricky. When I was first asked to write a text concerning Mr. Rogers I didn't know what it was about at all. Who was Mr. Rogers? What did he do to be spotted in such a way? Why him exactly? I started searching for information and got familiar with an astonishing personality. The deeper I got into his work, the more fascinated I was by the truth and honesty which he was showing in his behavior. This was a man who really believed in the values he was telling and teaching. And in my memory something came back. The sensation didn't leave me that I knew him from my childhood, when I lived in Canada and saw my first TV transmissions. I cannot tell if it's true, if my imagination created this familiarity due to the strong impression he made on me. But, in any case it was a confirmation of the universality of his belief and of my intention to write a text about this unusual man.